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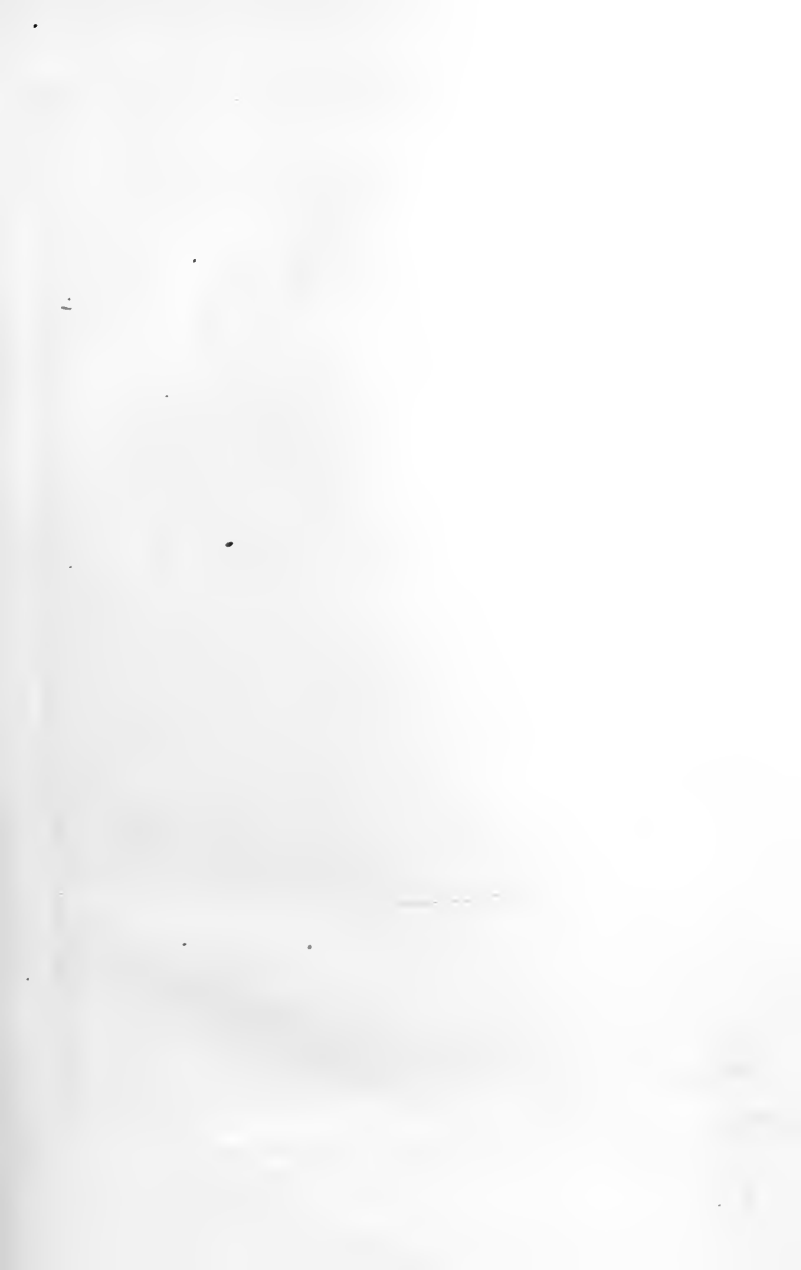


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**HARRY BUTTERS**

**R. F. A.**







Henry A. Butts



# HARRY BUTTERS

R. F. A.

"AN AMERICAN CITIZEN"

## *Life and War Letters*

EDITED BY MRS. DENIS O'SULLIVAN

WITH TWELVE PHOTOGRAPHS

[Butters, Henry Augustus, 1892-1916]

*The Brief Record of a California Boy  
Who Gave His Life for England*

NEW YORK: JOHN LANE COMPANY  
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*"O Passer-by, tell the Lacedemonians that we lie here  
obeying their orders." J. W. Mackail's Translation.*



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## PART I



## MR. GARVIN'S APPRECIATION

*From the Observer, London, September 10, 1916.*

### HOW AN AMERICAN THOUGHT AND DIED

We hope that the readers of *The Observer* to-day will bow their heads in honour and in reverence of a splendid young American citizen, Second Lieutenant Harry Butters, of California. He has laid down his life for England, the country he loved next to his own and for the Allies' cause he held to be the best and greatest that had ever been at stake in the world. At the age of twenty-four he was killed on Thursday night, August 31, by the same shell that killed his battery commander. He was no ordinary man.

As his example and purpose are better understood, his memory will win more than a passing thought from many on both sides of the Atlantic who never knew him. Those who did know him on this side mourn with deep sadness his early death, and will always hold him in mind with affectionate pride. He is to be honoured not only like our own, but with especial gratitude. Our own boys go forth in a temper that makes dross of all careful egotism in respect of their safety or any other personal interest. But they go forth in duty. This American boy—and what a straight,

upstanding pattern of youth and strength he was—owed us no duty and he gave us all. He gave it not impulsively nor in adventurous recklessness, but with a settled enthusiasm belonging to “the depth and not the tumult of the soul.” How much he gave is worth considering. His personal endowments and opportunities were such that when he made up his mind to quit everything in his bright California and to come into the war, his choice was heroic in the fullest sense of that word.

Born in California, he was early taken to South Africa, where his family had business connections; he was the only son of the late Henry Butters, of San Francisco, who had large interests in mines and railways. He was the nephew and heir of the well-known mining engineer, Mr. Charles Butters, who is still resident on the Pacific slope. The boy who was to die in action as a British officer was educated at first in California, but then came to this country and went to Beaumont College, Old Windsor. There he learned to know the meaning of England, her scenes, her history, and he was enchanted. He was devoted to his school. That devotion, one thinks, played its part in bringing him back when he thought that the old land was in the fight for all her centuries, that she too might have kept out of it, but that her cause was pure and glorious, that her entry into the struggle was a saving decision in the everlasting choice between right and wrong.

## THE CHOICE

When he went back to America he was a young man of mark, framed to excel both in sport and affairs. He was very tall, supple, active, frank and comely of face, as gay as he was good-looking. You saw by a glance at his hands that he had a born instinct for management and technique. He had been a good deal at sea. He knew all about horses and motor-cars. He was a crack shot and a fine polo player. His business ability was shown as soon as he took over the management of his father's estates. With this practical talent that could turn itself to anything he had other qualities. One remembers what a delightful level measuring glance he used to give suddenly from under his brows when he had finished rolling a cigarette and went on with his keen questioning about men and things. To talk with him was to receive a new and promising revelation of the mind of young America. Like so many of our own young soldiers in their attitude towards politics, he was not content with either of the old parties in the United States. He thought that his own generation if it was earnest enough might make a better hand both of social problems and world relations. He hoped to play his part. Though he always thought of himself in a fine spirit as "an American citizen," he wanted the United States to take a full share in the wider life of the world, and especially to work as far as possible for common ideals with the whole English-speaking race.

So when the news of the war came to San Francisco he put aside as fair a prospect of wealth, success, happiness and long life as could well open before a young man, and determined to throw in his lot with the old country and the Allies in the fight for civilisation against all the armed might of lawless iniquity which had flung itself on Belgium.

He was then twenty-two. He arrived in England in the early part of 1915 to join the British Army, and no military eye could doubt that the British Army had a rare recruit. Harry Butters got his first commission in the 11th Royal Warwickshire Regiment. Afterwards his technical faculty found more congenial scope when he transferred to the R. F. A. While training he stayed a good deal at the Rectory, Stow-on-the-Wold, Glos. The Rector writes:—"He was a warm-hearted, fearless young officer—as fine an American gentleman as ever crossed the Atlantic." It is much to say, but it is true.

#### A SPLENDID TESTAMENT

When we went to the front last year he saw heavy fighting in the British offensive of September, 1915. He described that action with graphic directness in a long letter which was printed in the *San Francisco Argonaut* last January. That letter at the end changed its tone and ended with words which may well stand in remembrance on both sides of the Atlantic as the con-



fession of faith of an American citizen in the Great War.

"I am now no longer untried. Two weeks' action in a great battle is to my credit, and if my faith in the wisdom of my course or my enthusiasm for the cause had been due to fail it would have done so during that time. But it has only become stronger. I find myself a soldier among millions of others in the great Allied armies fighting for all I believe right and civilised and humane against a power which is evil and which threatens the existence of all the right we prize and the freedom we enjoy.

"It may seem to you that for me this is all quite uncalled for, that it can only mean either the supreme sacrifice for nothing, or at best some of the best years of my life wasted; but I tell you that not only am I willing to give my life to this enterprise (for that is comparatively easy except when I think of you), but that I firmly believe—if I live through it to spend a useful lifetime with you—that never will I have an opportunity to gain so much honourable advancement for my own soul or to do so much for the cause of the world's progress, as I have here daily defending the liberty that mankind has so far gained against the attack of an enemy who would deprive us of it and set the world back some centuries if he could have his way. I think less of myself than I did, less of the heights of personal success I aspired to climb, and more of the service that each of us must render in payment for the right to live and by virtue of which only we can progress.

"Yes, my dearest folks, we are indeed doing the world's work over here, and I am in it to the finish."

That is a magnificent letter in the height of character, the earnestness of thought, the steady strength of mind and heart it reveals. None of us can read it without being moved and fortified. That phrase about "honourable advancement for my own soul" is one that deserves never to die. Rarely has the cause of the Allies been vindicated with more moral force; never was that cause sealed by a purer sacrifice.

## "IN IT TO THE FINISH"

His Captain writes:—

"He was with his guns and no one could have died in a nobler way. . . . He was one of the brightest, cheeriest boys I have ever known, and always the life and soul of the mess. . . . We all realised his nobility in coming to the help of another country entirely of his own free will, and understood what a big heart he had. He was loved by all."

He is in it to the finish indeed with comrades of his adoption who have passed with him. He takes his last sleep out there with so many of the brave and true where none was braver and truer than he, and amongst the recollections of the great war his name will not be forgotten. Beaumont will take care of that. In his old college we doubt not he will have his permanent memorial. In our thoughts the flags of Britain and America cover his heart with double honour. We shall never see them entwined again without thinking of him. No American can read these lines without being proud of him. No Briton can read them without feelings deeper, more moved, than can be said in any words. We are grateful, as he would have liked, to his America that bred him. We are grateful to his "dearest folks," though they were not all with him in his course, for no man could be what he was without being the scion of a strong stock. Since he came from California, what epitaph can compare with these verses of Bret Harte, which might have been written for Harry Butters and never suited better

the life and death of any Californian of them all, though it is a gallant State:—

Hark! I hear the tramp of thousands  
And of armed men the hum;  
Lo! a nation's hosts have gathered  
Round the quick alarming drum—  
Saying, "Come,  
Freemen, come!  
Ere your heritage be wasted," said the  
quick alarming drum.

"Let me of my heart take counsel:  
War is not of life the sum;  
Who shall stay and reap the harvest  
When the autumn days shall come?"  
But the drum  
Echoed, "Come!  
Death shall reap the braver harvest,"  
said the solemn-sounding drum.

*This was not signed, but was written by the  
Editor, Mr. J. L. Garvin.*

## COLONEL WINSTON CHURCHILL'S LETTER

*From the Observer, London, September 10, 1916.*

### A MEETING AT THE FRONT

"The death in action of this young American gentleman is a blow to the many friends he had made for himself in the British Army. I met him quite by chance in his observation post near Ploegsteert and was charmed by his extraordinary fund of wit and gaiety. His conversation was delightful, full at once of fun and good sense and continually lighted by original reflections and captivating Americanisms. A whole table could sit and listen to him with the utmost interest and pleasure. He was a great 'character,' and had he lived to enjoy his bright worldly prospects he could not have failed to make his mark.

"He was a very good soldier and competent artillery officer, very well thought of by his comrades and trusted by his superiors. He had seen much service in the front line, including the battle of Loos, and came through unscathed until in May last a bouquet of 5.9 shells destroyed his observation post and stunned him with shell shock and concussion. Leave was pressed upon him, but he could only be induced to take a few days' rest. In little more than a week he was back at the

front—disdainful as ever of the continual threats of death. And thus quite simply he met his fate. 'No, sir, I have taken no oath of allegiance, but I'm just as loyal.'

"I venture to put these few lines on paper not because his sacrifice and story differ from those of so many others in these hard days, but because, coming of his own free will, with no national call or obligation, a stranger from across the ocean, to fight and die in our ranks, he had it in his power to pay a tribute to our cause of exceptional value. He did not come all the way from San Francisco only out of affection for the ancient home of his forbears or in a spirit of mere adventure. He was in sentiment a thorough American. All his ordinary loyalties rested with his own country. But he had a very firm and clear conception of the issues which are at stake in this struggle. He had minutely studied the official documents bearing upon the origin of the war, and he conceived that not merely national causes but international causes of the highest importance were involved, and must now be decided by arms. And to these he thought it his duty to testify 'till a right peace was signed.' Such testimony cannot be impeached."



**PART II**  
**LIFE**





## FOREWORD

*We who are truly Californian believe ourselves still too young for the completion of any history. When the life, the American life, of the State itself dates from 1849, how has there been time for any individual drama?*

*Yet, coming back to Piedmont, which I last knew in 1891, when a delicious spring stretched, unobstructed, in green vistas down to the isolated blue jewel of Lake Merritt, I realise that a town has encroached upon these hills, that houses have been built, have grown old, have even been replaced. And if houses, how much more the lives they sheltered!*

*One such house stares at me across its lawns and opulent overgrown palms; raises the meaningless turrets and gables of an architecture of the early nineties. Piedmont has since built itself so beautifully one marvels at the respect it once paid these big ugly expensive homes. Yet there is a friendliness about them, a comfort in the low steps and frequent verandas, an ease in the opening of one overfilled room into another. And around them is all the luxuriance of flowers and blue sky and sunshine; the ample spaces of California, the clear, clean, invigorating air.*

*If any world is to produce a new type, surely 'twill be this world between the Pacific and the Sierras, where beauty and lavishness crowd out meaner aspects . . . where cities can be reborn in ten astounding years . . . where the human plant develops, unhampered, in the superb air.*

*This air, this green Piedmont, this big yellow house, sheltered an existence so splendidly full and vigorous that one likes to think it an embodiment of California. It ended in twenty-four years . . . on the other side of the world, in one blinding instant, under those stars that look down on the Somme.*

*But the twenty-four years had been as full as a slower age or race would have taken twice twenty-four to equal. They promised to be the forerunners of as many more, and as many more again, of all that life can give of gaiety, of happiness, success, men's praise. And they were sacrificed, not carelessly, not by an accident, but after serious reflection, in an alert consciousness of the cost.*

*California has perhaps not realised the meaning of this war. The issues are still obscured here. But they were vivid to one boy's clear eyes; were sanely considered; the logical deduction logically acted upon; the price paid.*

*So these lovely Piedmont hills, with the wide streets and new houses of to-day, the wooden palaces of an earlier period; with Diablo and his fellow mountains rising blue behind them; before them, San Francisco and the deep Bay; and, always splendid and serene, Tamalpais against a western sky . . . these will be the background of other stories. But shall we see again so erect and fine a figure moving gaily out of certain prosperity to almost certain death?*

*The Igloo, Piedmont.  
February, 1917.*



# I

## THE PARENTS

Harry Butters was born in San Francisco, in 1892, on the 28th of April. His people were New Englanders on both sides. His father, Henry Augustus Butters, was the son of Henry Augustus Butters of Andover, Massachusetts, and Sarah, daughter of the Rev. G. W. Finney, a Congregational minister from Oneida County, New York.

His mother, Lucy Woodworth Beebee, was the child of Isaac Watts Beebee of New York, and Georgiana Woodworth, whose father, Samuel Woodworth of Scituate, Massachusetts, wrote "The Old Oaken Bucket," dear to the American heart.

The original Butters, or Butter, came from Scotland. The first Finney was Irish; the first Woodworth, English; while the Beebee pioneer was French. The family legend was that he came with Lafayette. Curious if the first of his line here left France to fight for America . . . and the last went back to fight for France!

Some lives are ruled by the happy little god of adventure. If Harry Butters was predestined

to an extraordinary shifting of the dramatic, his domestic antecedents but prepared the way.

His father, so far as one can reconstruct that striking personality, was a big man, nervous, moody, magnetic; with the modern American's capacity for great business schemes; an astonishing executive ability; a compelling eloquence.

All these, except the moodiness, the boy inherited . . . and had he lived, would perhaps have undertaken as colossal enterprises, would have flashed into as meteoric successes . . . and failures . . . as the brilliant father.

California, South Africa, Switzerland, France, Mexico, and California again . . . these were the settings of Henry Butters' genius. He thought in terms of provinces, not acres; of world markets. Building railroads or houses, engineering tramways in Geneva, or driving four-in-hand at Burlingame, he was possessed of that unconquerable spirit which has made a few men rise in glowing intensity from the dull mass of the rest of us.

It was part of his intensity, that, meeting the beautiful widow (from whom Harry afterwards was to get so much of his radiance and tenderness), he should, a year's sad widower himself, sweep her in a few glowing months off her feet into her third matrimonial alliance . . . marrying her triumphantly in the Catholic Church which he himself had entered only after knowing her; adopting the two little girls of her second marriage; making himself the genuine friend and pro-



THE CHILD





lector of the children of her first . . . and finally, concentrating all the rapture of his existence upon the only child of this marriage, Henry Augustus Butters the third, the beloved "Harry" of this memoir.

## II

### THE CHILD

The child was beautiful; a starry-eyed, frank, vigorous creature, with that rare gift, magnetism, the human charm that draws both mind and heart. There seems (as one studies old letters and talks to old friends), to have been no moment when the boy was not adored. A world of sunshine, change, luxury, the passionate devotion of both parents, the affection of big and little half-sisters and half-brothers whirled about him.

In his first ten years he was taken five times to Europe, twice to South Africa. There were wonderful recollections of Kensington Gardens, and the Royal Palace Hotel near by; of the Elysée in Paris; of that suite in the Beau Rivage at Geneva, where just before, in their very rooms, the lovely, tragic Empress of Austria had breathed her last; of Bailey's Hotel in London, where South Africans do congregate; of Hampstead Heath, where he played under the kind eyes of his devoted nurse Carey, with a little unnamed Rosamond; of two months at Hampton Court, where

Harry had a boat on the Thames, named after him, . . and his wonderful father used to drive his four-in-hand down from London . . and the child himself learned to drive.

Then long summers in Shasta county; in Lassen, where his father owned the great Constantia Ranch; the buying of a whole "block" in Piedmont; the building of Alta Vista, the big yellow house, still part of Harry's estate, that looks over at me now.

Family friendships appear dimly through the boy's recollections . . . John Hays Hammond, his handsome wife, and the Sackés of Johannesburg days; "Uncle Charlie," his father's only brother; Emma Carey, the fine tall nurse who loved him; the lively family, part Edwards, part Sengteller, chief of whom was "Davy" the half brother, David Edwards, always a strong influence in Harry's life; and there is a happy remembrance of Alta Vista when so many of the big family gathered for the first New Year there, and the father wrote a little piece in which Harry, then some eight years of age, played "Old Time" to the general amazement.

And, through all this, the child's gay, unspoiled presence moves enchantingly . . in the great European hotels, where the usual little American is a horror, or in the woods and fields at home. One Californian friend, Mr. Harry Smith, writes of him:



ALTA VISTA



"On one occasion, up at Lierly's, we spent nearly the whole day together. In the morning I had shouldered my rifle, and was about to start alone, on a 'still hunt' for deer. I caught a wistful look in his great eyes. (He couldn't have been more than seven or eight.) I asked him whether he wouldn't like to go along with me. His instant 'You bet!' dispelled any doubt. He insisted on carrying the lunch. The day remains vividly in my memory, for beyond the pretense, I don't think I even looked for a buck, so much interested was I in his talk. Anyway, deer were scarce . . . so we pretended we were looking for Indians, who had burned a village and carried off a beautiful girl. It was our duty to rescue her. He couldn't have been more natural if it had been reality. His earnest and whispered counsel that we must be careful not to be ambushed, was secretly amusing to me. I surely was rewarded for taking him along, he was so interesting and companionable, so modest, without the slightest suspicion of his own brightness."

### III

#### THE BOY

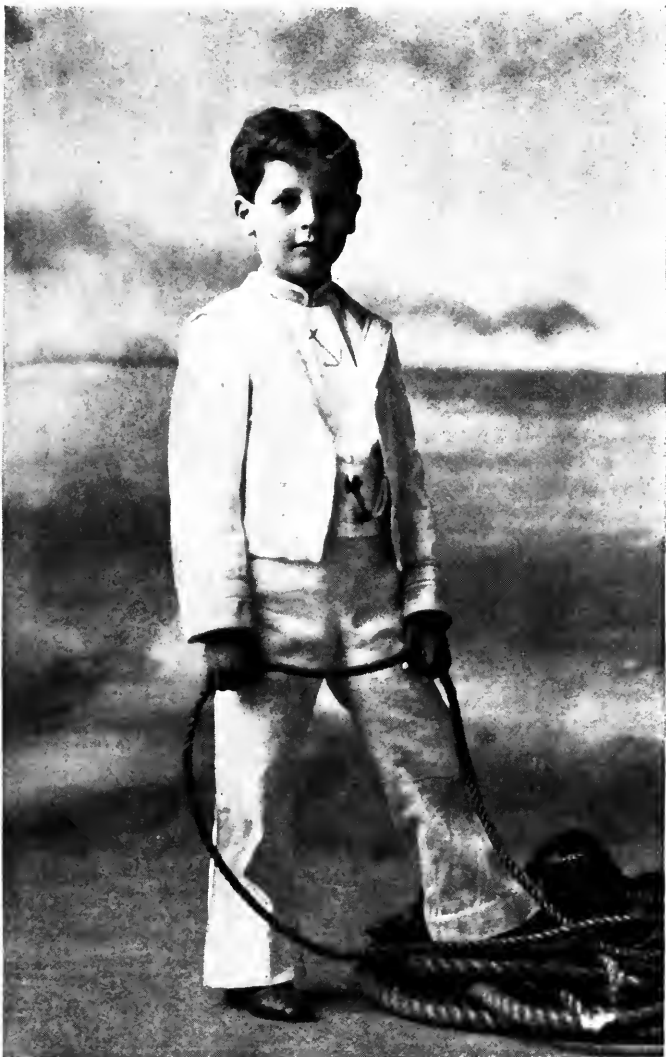
The second period of the boy's life, which was to cover family tragedies, opened fittingly on the first minor note. The parents, and the best loved sister, Lucile, went abroad. The child was left

with dear "Grandma Beebee," and "Grandma Butters," but in the care of an English tutor who was not kind to him. Lucile, returning alone before Thanksgiving, summed up the situation, and took the small, unhappy, plucky boy into her own hands. Then began a devotion on his part which lasted his life out, and eventually grew into the deepest affection of his existence.

. After this, the first school . . . Miss Horton's in Oakland. The first friend, Ernest Percy. A last summer at Constantia, soon to be sold. A first camping trip . . and no one out of California knows what that can be! . . to Big Meadows, in Lassen County. In 1905, when he was thirteen, the Piedmont public school. . . . One sees the little gallant figure riding bareheaded every day across the hills on his horse "Billy."

The father meanwhile had embarked on the magnificent undertaking, the strain of which, had they but known, was to be the precursor of his death. Recognising the possibilities of the fertile plain of the Sacramento, a domain, mile for mile, as large as the whole of Ireland, he had, in a few months, with characteristic vigor and far-sightedness, conceived and launched that scheme of traction now known and operating as the Northern Electric Railway.

The winter of 1905-1906 Harry spent with Mrs. Butters in Santa Barbara, where he went to school. They were thus away during much of this



FIVE YEARS OLD





strenuous period of the father's career. The year before Mr. Butters had won the blue ribbon at Burlingame; had now entered for the Los Angeles Horse Show; (Harry came naturally by his love of horse flesh) . . . and was on his way south to join them.

But the 18th of April shook San Francisco to ruins. How many human plans and doings were swept into the smoke of the Great Fire!

The boy had gone to Los Angeles with his mother. . . . He was now fourteen, and realising, beyond his years, the clouds that rolled over his domestic horizon as heavily and unexpectedly as they did over San Francisco. The elder Butters had put his heart, and most of his resources, into the Northern Electric. Had the cataclysm of 1906 delayed, had his own health stood the strain, he would have carried his plans to a triumphant conclusion.

But the fine mechanism of that will had weakened . . . and was soon to snap. The boy, who adored his father, watched him with unchildlike solicitude. . . . Despite another wonderful summer home, "Los Nogales" of his father's building at Chico; despite another camping trip to Big Meadows with Ernie Percy; despite the joy of another journey to Europe, and the excitement of entering a school abroad, the boy's consciousness seems to have centred always on his senior. They were more than father and son . . . they were mutually enraptured friends.

## IV

## BEAUMONT

Harry entered Beaumont College in October, 1906. He was there only one school year, but that year made the fervent little American understand how, by blood, tradition, ideals, he was English as well as American. There lingers a curious feeling in many minds that one goes back, if he can, to his own place to die. It is as true that many a one is drawn back to live in the environment of his forefathers. We Americans, for all the ancient differences with England, are mainly English. Later, it became Harry's dearest dream to bring about some great union of the English speaking races. He was fond of saying, like some others, that had America and England made an offensive and defensive alliance, there never would have been this war.

At any rate, though he chafed at first under the restrictions and conventions of Beaumont, he soon adapted himself to the new life. A photograph of his class brings his eager little Californian type into vivid relief against the thirty more serious English faces. Beaumont and Old Windsor, the composed valley of the quiet Thames, made a larger and even more contrasting background to the alert enquiring Westerner. He ran away from school in early days, made an adventurous trip to London, and burst into the City offices of

his father's firm . . . but this was promptly forgiven as a natural Californian impetuosity.

Father Carey, whom he always spoke of as his dear "Father Tim," wrote him not long afterward, when the boy had returned to America :

BEAUMONT COLLEGE,  
OLD WINDSOR,  
Easter, 1908.

DEAR HARRY,

I was up to my ears in work when your letter arrived, and it was with reluctance I postponed writing to you. I saw holidays looming in the distance, and I knew the day would come when I could have a leisurely chat with our "American Cousin."

Many thanks for your interesting letter. I was delighted to hear that you are getting on A 1, and so happy. Apparently work does not seem to weigh too heavily on your shoulders, and if it does, you maintain your cheerful spirits in spite of it! Judging from your letter, I should imagine rules and regulations at your present school are more in accordance with your tastes than those at Beaumont.

Now that it is all past history, I wonder if I can depict for your amusement what a comical card you were when first you came to Beaumont? Of course, I speak only of Harry Butters in the school-room, although I imagine an account of Harry Butters outside the school-room would be equally interesting.

Can you imagine what it would be, to break in a

four-year-old colt which had never previously had any training or handling whatever?

Have you ever seen how a strong salmon struggles, when it is landed—to get back to its native waters?

Have you ever noticed the endeavours of a wild bird?—when it is caught and put in a cage?

Now, whichever of these examples appeals to you most, just multiply it by five and a half—and then square it,—and then see if the result is at all familiar to you.

Speaking of your first month in the school-room, I might mention that hardly ever did your variations of posture and looks annoy me; on the contrary, they amused me immensely, though I may have concealed the fact, and pretended otherwise.

Though the poor Master might easily ask himself “what next?”—when he saw the American Cousin sitting with his back to the master, and both feet placed carefully on the top of the ink-pots of the desk behind.

In those early days I never dreamt of making any personal remark, or giving any personal admonition—I thought it better to watch and take stock, and contented myself with a *general* remark, to the effect that “it is a good thing *occasionally*,—say, once a day, for a few minutes—to look straight in front of one!”

After a time, I found those general remarks had their effect. And what was my joy, after a few weeks, to find that but *one* foot was engaged in covering an ink-pot? My joy was somewhat diminished, however, when I noticed that one hand

was engaged in pinching a neighbour—probably Thomas ——, and the other hand hard at work, drawing a complimentary caricature of the Master! But I must do you justice and say,—that the expression on the eyes and face *at that moment*, betokened the most intense attention.

Many months have passed since, and perhaps the picture is rather exaggerated—but I'm sure you won't mind.

It was most edifying to see how you buckled to the last half-year, and showed all that the wild H.A.B. need be second to none, if he wished. . . .

I hope you will always be happy, and cheerful—may luck ever attend you!

Affectionately yours,

TIMOTHY CAREY, S. J.

And lately Father Carey has written:

“Harry Butters joined the class in Figures when he came to Beaumont. In classics he was, perhaps, a bit behind the others, but in English and kindred subjects, and in general knowledge, he was far, far in advance of them, while in brains and the power of application and concentration, it was not easy to meet his equal.

But there was *some* difficulty in getting him to settle to work when he arrived. The discipline of an English school was not a thing he took to easily—for the first week or so Harry was like a young horse loose in a box.

I remember, in the class-room, he was sitting near a window overlooking the Community lawn. He stood up to look out of the window, whenever any one was passing below, and he did the same when *no one* was passing! He spoke aloud, whenever it took his fancy—he answered questions not addressed to him—and in the same loud voice, he applied to others, epithets, which, in his view, their answers to questions merited.

But Harry was a universal favourite with all the boys, though he could assert himself when necessary.

I remember such an occasion during his first week at Beaumont, and while being broken in. The boy sitting behind Harry in class had recently been nicknamed 'Eliza.' The name was not acceptable to him, and he was anxious to get rid of it before it stuck. Here was his chance—pass it on to the wild new-comer! (The attempt was made in class, and under pretence of helping the Master, in his endeavours to reform Harry).

The breach of discipline entailed was tolerated apparently on that understanding. For some days the lessons were enlivened by such expressions as—'Sit down, Eliza'—'Don't turn round, Eliza.'—'Eliza, you'll fall out of the window!'—'Don't make speeches, Eliza!'—'Shut up when you've answered the question.'

At last Harry's voice rang out—'My name is Harry Butters—I'm quite satisfied with it—and if you persist in calling me "Eliza" it will only be on condition that you are stronger than I.'

The name 'Eliza' was never again applied to Harry.

Harry's power with the pen, and facilities in conversation, were extraordinary. Even as a boy at Beaumont, he always 'held the floor.' It was a rare thing to find him quiet, except when devouring a book—and even then he often talked aloud to himself. There was never a pause for an appropriate word, and his felicity in expression was remarkable.

One particular incident has impressed itself on my memory.

It was at Beaumont, and the boys were giving a 'Concertatie.' A 'Concertatie' is an exhibition of class-work, given in the Community refectory, during dinner. The boys are arranged in the middle of the room and are questioned by their Master on one or more subjects that have been treated in class during the term.

'Concertaties' are not very entertaining, for the Master, or class, or listeners—and anything which raises a laugh on such occasions is welcome.

On the day in question, the class subjects had been exhausted, and there were yet five or six minutes to be put in. The Master happily hit on the right man to kill time.

'Harry Butters, will you spell "Kangaroo," and tell us all you know about the animal?'

It was quite a surprise question. Most British boys at that age would perhaps have spelt the word with some hesitation,—while a description of the animal, if any were forthcoming, would

have been painfully halting. I wish I could remember Harry's answer—it was superb!

He began straight off—spoke very fast, as was his wont—and with never a moment's pause for a word—in describing the animal, its habits, or the countries where it abounds.

The five minutes were up, and still Harry went on.

At last he stopped, to the regret of all, who greeted his answer with admiring laughter.

Harry knew he had their approval, for he began again—'Oh, I forgot to tell you, it has a pouch in which it carries its young—' etc.

"Two things I particularly noticed in Harry—his extraordinary devotion to Beaumont, and his genuine attachment to, and affection for, his friends. I met him on a visit to the college some years ago, and he remarked—'Wherever I have been, old boy, you may be sure people have heard of Beaumont, even if they didn't know of its existence before. They know now all about the beeches, and the swimming-tank, and the boating-club, and the rest. It is a puzzle even to myself, how the old place attracts me—'

He was as true as gold to his friends, and he had his own original and natural ways of proving it—and here he spoke by deeds, and didn't bother much about words and professions of friendship.

The following incident, among many, occurs to me, and I give it, as illustrating Harry's original ways in other respects.





BEAUMONT COLLEGE, OLD WINDSOR



He was over in London four years ago, and called at Beaumont, to see some old friends. One of them was absent at the time, and Harry was informed he was in Dublin. Off he went to Dublin, to find that the friend was in the South of Ireland. Harry finally turned up in the South. He had no luggage with him, and as he was to stay the night, his friend asked him if he had left his luggage at the station.

'Oh no,' came the reply, 'I have all my luggage with me!' and forthwith he produced a comb and tooth-brush from his pocket.

'But surely, Harry, you don't always go about like that?'

'Yes, I frequently do, and I manage quite comfortably. For instance, I bought a pair of socks in London, and they did duty, until I got to a shop in your village here—where I left them, and bought a new pair! Yes, and the Beaumont Union dinner comes off in London in a few days, and I want to be at it, to look up some old friends, but I haven't a dress-suit with me to appear in! But you can reckon I'm going, and they'll make allowance for a wandering Yankee.' "

## V

### EXETER

During the Christmas holidays there was a trip to Italy, and the summer was spent in Surrey.

But in September they let him return to America. He had been promised a time at Exeter, preparatory to entering Harvard. His chum Ernest Percy was there, and Exeter, by the way, had been the home of many of the Butters family.

The two boys spent their Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays with Ernest's aunt, Mrs. Harmon, in Portland, Maine.

She writes of this time:

"Harry was so bright and merry always—and just the *life* of our Thanksgiving-Day dinner—only his thoughts were with you all too. At the end of the afternoon he said—'May I send a telegram over the telephone, Auntie Belle?' I can still hear his ringing voice as he gave it—such a hearty greeting to you all at 'Alta Vista'—warm-hearted, loving—affectionate Harry—

Another time, I sat by my table sewing labels on new stockings, when Harry came up to my room, and sat a few moments watching me. When I would finish a pair, he would roll it so tightly and compactly that I said, 'Why Harry boy, where did you ever learn to do this so well?' 'Oh, I've travelled a lot for a kid, Auntie Belle, and you see I've learned how to pack!'—Then he stopped a moment, and a serious look came into his beautiful eyes—'*Don't* sew any more—*let's talk!*'—so I dropped my work, and sitting there, in the fading light of afternoon, Harry told me of his boyhood—of his going to South Africa—

and on through some of Beaumont College life. We talked of the future, too—and Harry's earnest tone impressed me, for even then, the boy-spirit of nobility of purpose was all there, when he said—'I *must* make good, Auntie Belle—you know *I* am the only Butters—and Papa and Uncle Charlie have been such *howling successes!*'

He touched on the Church too—and said in such a sweet way—'I don't think you people who are *not* Catholics love your Church as we love ours. Ernie doesn't care for his as *I* do; you know *I* think *our* Church helps a fellow to be good!'

It was growing dark, and I rose to turn on the light, when in a quick way, Harry put his arm around me, and kissed me, saying—'You've been mighty good to let me talk to you, just as I wanted to—I don't often want to—but I *did* this afternoon, and it has been so nice and homey up here!—'

*Bless the boy!"*

## VI

### THE FATHER'S DEATH

Harry came west for the summer of 1908, dividing his freedom between Alta Vista and Etna Springs near St. Helena. His father and he drove through Lake County, that wild untouched region around Clear Lake. It was their last time together. The boy returned to Exeter in September,

on the 15th. On October 26th the father died of pneumonia.

The news fell with stunning suddenness. The boy was expecting a telegram in answer to his request for a Christmas holiday at home, and opened the yellow paper casually.

He was sixteen.

This was in 1908, more than two years after the Earthquake, less than six before the Great War.

## VII

### IN YOSEMITE

There was a sorrowful gathering that Christmas at Alta Vista. For ten days the whole family were together there, the tall frank boy as much the centre of the curiously assorted group as the lovely child had been. But for all his youth, he was a man now, and for all his sixteen years, he was, and was to remain, a delightful child.

In the first days of 1909, Harry took his mother and one sister to San Ysidro, at Santa Barbara. Here he bought his first car, called the *White Streak*, appropriately, for from the first he was a reckless driver. A visitor, Mr. Murray Ogilvy, afterward a friend, describes his original glimpse of the handsome boy who dashed along the gleam-



THE BOY





ing Montecito road, where Mr. Ogilvy was strolling; slowed down, and offered the stranger a lift. This accepted, he said at once, in characteristic fashion, "My name's Harry Butters. Shall I let her go?" "Letting her go" was a trick of Harry's; but he was a born motorist as he was a born mechanic, and seldom came to grief.

At this time he had a serious attack of pleurisy, and as soon as he was convalescent, they left Santa Barbara for Yosemite Valley, where tragedy was again to fall upon the boy.

He had gone over to Wawona alone, when, on June 17th, he was hastily recalled by the word of his mother's illness. On the 20th she died, far from home, in the splendid silence of the great Valley. They could get nothing—they were literally in the wilderness . . . but the boy procured a soldier's coffin from the military camp close by, helped place his mother's body in it, and himself drove the army wagon on which they laid her, to El Portal.

One speculates on that long, wild, strange journey . . . on the courage and beauty of the boy mounted on his army wagon, guiding the horses that drew his dead mother through the majestic solitude of that silent country.

## VIII

## AT SEVENTEEN

That was the midsummer of 1909. Harry was now seventeen. His father's will had left him heir to the whole Butters fortune, depleted sadly by the Northern Electric. And now, by his mother's, he found he was again sole legatee.

There was a dramatic moment in the big room at Alta Vista when the lawyer finished reading the will to the assembled family. The boy had listened with a pale face. He had loved both parents passionately; their affection for him had amounted to idolatry; but he stood up quietly, as though his years were 47 rather than 17, and announced that he must contest the will; that his mother's estate must be equally divided amongst her eight children; if this could not be done while he was a minor, he pledged himself to such a division when his 21st birthday should arrive. Later, he appealed to the Court to have Lucile and David appointed his guardians.

The situation was amazing. The lawyer for the executors, Mr. Clarence McKinstry, while applauding the boy's sense of justice, was of course obliged to uphold the will. There was a law suit, and Harry was momentarily embittered that any obstacle should be put in the way of his making what he considered a rightful restitution . . . of giving away, in other words, a fortune clearly

meant to be his own. He wrote some two years later to Lucile, when he was at sea, and had had time to weigh the matter:

BARK "DRUMMUIR,"  
AT ANCHOR OFF PORT ELIZABETH,  
May 7th, 1911.

MY DEAREST GOOKIE,

Thank God, the contest is over at last! What a joy it is to know that all the family are (or soon will be) comfortably fixed.

No, Gookie, I am not going to write Mr. McKinstry—because I do not consider a letter adequate to the situation. But when I reach home again, I shall call upon him, and apologise for the utterly uncalled-for way in which I misjudged him. I made up my mind to this a long time ago—before we rounded the Horn, in fact—and my decision would have been in no way affected, had he carried the case to a higher court.

At least one good thing has come out of it to me—I have learned to keep my *ugly mouth shut!*

Good-bye, dearest—

HABS.

## IX

### AROUND THE WORLD

The time between this and his coming of age, nearly four years, he, or fortune for him, crowded to the brim. He entered a school in Berkeley to

prepare for the University of California, but in the holidays following his first year, when he was camping with his oldest half brother, Will Edwards, and his friend Ernest Percy, he contracted pneumonia. This was so serious that he was ordered away by his physician and friend, Dr. Fearn, on a long sea trip.

He shipped as purser on the bark *Drummuir*, with Captain Fleming, who was to become one of his dearest friends. They sailed from Seattle in December, 1910.

### *Letter to Lucile.*

AT PUGET SOUND,  
BARK "DRUMMUIR,"  
Dec. 10, 1910.

"Well, Gookie, you see I am all settled O. K., for the next year, and simply waiting now to get to sea. I am absolutely care-free, with not a responsibility in the world, except to live up to what is right, and do all the strengthening *physical* work I can—at least, six hours of good hard *physical* work a day—as much as possible of it aloft, which will give me the balance, the poise, and the confidence, that no other work will. When I get back, I will certainly surprise you—I say it with absolute confidence.

This will be my last letter to you, and you will have to show to the 'Bunch' as usual.

And now, one last sentiment—You will, according to your letter, all be dining at Davy's on

Christmas night—very well—Be sure and have the exact time on the table, and at eight o'clock, *exact Pacific time*, you can all think of me and drink my health. *At that time* I shall be about one hundred miles directly off San Francisco—nearer to you all than I shall be again for a year—and I shall be thinking of you all, and will return the toast. Our spirits, at least, will be in communication for a moment. Do this, as I shall count on it.

And now, Gookie, good-bye! As you know, there is no need to tell you, how *much* you are to me—I love you dearly, and will return to you safe, and sound, and a different boy from the one that left you.

God bless you, a hundred times—my only Mother now.”

HABS.

Harry kept a daily record of the ten months which followed, so it is easy to picture them accurately. Would any other boy of eighteen, even if he had himself elected to go into exile for the main part of a year, have converted that long dull period of existence into a well-thought-out system of education, physical and mental? Would another boy have forced himself to study navigation, drawing and Kant's philosophy, with the same enthusiasm that took him adventurously aloft? (and reaching the top gallant yard some 100 feet above the deck, “dizzy height and quivering ropes!” is no joke the first time). Would another boy have reduced to an accurate science

the washing of his clothes, the mastication of his food (he found, poor boy, that he was always hungry till he hit upon the stern resolve to chew every mouthful twice the normal time!), the deliberate conquering of "weather depression" by certain work?

No . . . this surprising young creature, with all his exuberance, his tempestuous gaiety and gloom, his restlessness and eagerness for change, made himself a sound ambitious program to cover every moment of every day (reserving only Sunday for idle time), and kept to it like a school master.

Making friends was a more natural matter. Skipper, mate, second mate, steward, cook, "sails" and carpenter, deck boy and the rest of the crew, twenty-two souls in all, . . . were obviously devoted to the boy, heart and mind, from the day of his appearance on board.

Consequently, there reigned harmony. Now and then "warm old arguments" as Harry writes, took place. "However," continues this infant Solomon, "as these arguments may lead in time to bad feeling, I have determined to practise self-control . . . a virtue I am sadly in need of, and in the future to follow as nearly as possible the three rules: First, never argue with a man who knows less than you do; inform him if he wants information, but don't argue with him. Second, never argue with a man who knows more than you

do . . . instead, learn from him. . . . Third, never argue with a man who is pig-headed . . . he is not worth your time and you will only lose your temper."

The good ship *Drummuir* passed slowly down the slow Pacific, sighting neither land nor other craft . . . through the Tropics, . . . a week of the doldrums . . . with the sunsets glorious beyond telling, and the sharks evil and making for evil.

She crossed the line in mid-January, and they bore south under varying winds. . . . Two ships now passed them, and later, 25S and 130W they sighted Pitcairn Island. Then through "the roaring forties" and so on to the Horn.

"On the morning of Feb. 20th, we sighted Diego Ramirez, a small island lying about 50 miles to the west and south of Cape Horn. Five hours later that group of islands which form the southernmost point of the American continent was in plain view . . . the jagged outline occupying about a sixth of the visible horizon. The weather was balmy, the wind light but fair, so I sat up on the quarterdeck the greater part of the day, smoking and sketching. And indeed, the scene was one I might well take time to admire, for in all probability I shall never see it or its like again. In the foreground rose the grim peak of Horn Island, falling away on the south east in a series of beetling crags and buttresses, to that harmless

little point of land, the gigantic bugbear of the seas, Cape Horn!" Thus Harry.

They rounded the "gigantic bugbear" easily and so on across the gray, disturbed Atlantic. But favoring winds took them eastward at an average of 150 miles a day. They were near to sailing, as sailors believe a ship must sail, some day, over her own grave. . . . One did not think in 1911 that in 1914 one German shell would end the life of the *Drummuir*, and in 1916 another the life of this handsome boy she was now carrying.

On March 30 they reached anchorage off Port Elizabeth, on the South African coast . . . their first landing in 104 days. Then came Harry's visit to Capetown and the scene of his father's exploits . . . (for Henry Butters installed the first electric tramways); trips along the coast, where he had driven so often as a little boy . . . to Wynburg and to Muizenburg, and to High Constantia, from which the elder Butters had taken the name for his great holdings in Lassen County, California. . . . One can share the happy enthusiasm of all this. . . . He writes:

"I certainly had a royal old time in Capetown, and if ever I had my money's worth, I had it there."

The voyage from here, "running down the Easting" was a stormy one. In early June the



*Drummuir* was dismayed and lay wallowing in a heavy sea. A few hours of blessed intermission in the tempest made it possible to patch up temporarily. But with renewed violence in wind and sea, the Skipper re-assures himself "If we've got to go, we've got to go."

Harry, scribbling in the pounding washing desolation adds, "a highly logical and philosophical conclusion, but pretty cheerless to a man" (our man was eighteen, save the mark!) "who has about as much to live for as it's possible to have. But, after all, I guess he's right. I have been mortally afraid of several things in this world, but there is one thing I have always made up my mind that I would not fear when the time came for me to look it in the face . . . and that is Death. For it is the one inevitable thing in Life. Therefore I do not fear it now . . . when it happens to be put up to me a little sooner than I expected."

At 11:30 the glass dropped to 28.90 and was still falling! "The men's faces are white and altogether we are in a hell of a fix." But a few minutes later he writes: "If Barabbas" (his name for his brother-in-law) "were here, he would agree with me that it is no place for a minister's son!"

But they rode out the gale . . . dismayed, staggering, smashed up as they were, and after some strenuous days of clearing away wreckage and of temporary repairs, they managed to approach Sydney Harbour. Here another storm

nearly finished them. Taken in tow by the tug *Heroine*, in a fierce gale and heavy sea, the *Drummuir* ran into the smaller vessel, and herself nearly piled up on the Coogee Rocks. The escape of both barque and tug seems a miracle . . . and reading the boy's breathless account of those anxious hours, one sighs with relief at last to know the danger surmounted.

When they reached Sydney, the Skipper, who had come to love him like a younger brother, was bewildered by the boy's sudden determination to leave the *Drummuir*. He had counted on Harry's company during the long period necessary for repairs. The ten months together had made the two warm friends, but even to so near a companion Harry did not explain that in addition to a natural impatience at the delay, a private worry drew him home. Lucile had not been well . . . had broken down indeed, after many years in playing comforter and guide to the diverse members of the big family. Harry, with characteristic impetuosity, abandoned his happy *Drummuir* experience without a word, to rush across half the world. He caught the *Aorangi* \* home, and burst in upon a delighted family.

The ten months at sea had established his physical well being. His vitality had now the secure basis of a strength proportionate to his great frame. When he returned to San Francisco

\*The *Aorangi*, like the *Drummuir*, was later sunk by the Germans.



ON THE "DRUMMUIR"



in the August of this year, 1911, he was some three months past nineteen.

## X

### INTERMEDIATE YEARS

There are no letters to draw upon for the years between this and his final departure from California in 1915 . . . but one catches glimpses of the Fortunate Youth in happy environments of his own choosing. It was like him to decide upon six months of farm work in the valley of the San Joaquin, where he toiled as a day laborer, partly to confirm his physical improvement, partly to acquire practical knowledge of a rancher's life, so that when, a year later, he bought a hundred acres near Ripon, close to the scene of his hard work, he was ready to take charge of his farm.

It was like him and his good luck too, that he should find himself by chance one day on Mt. Tamalpais, months after he had left the Antipodes, and should be watching the western horizon at the moment when the well-known sea-worn bark *Drummuir* stole in at the Golden Gate.

The Skipper's account of the boy's dash down the mountain, across the Bay, and out alongside the *Drummuir*, is epic.

What Harry loved—friend, home, horse, idea, tradition—was always the object of a tempestuous affection . . . and such surely the little god of adventure befriends.

Before buying his San Joaquin ranch, which, in keeping with this sense of loyalty, he named in honor of that martyr saint who was the patron of Beaumont College, Rancho San Stanislaus . . . he made a flying trip to Europe to see his old school, and various friends in London and Paris, returning by the Panama Canal.

Then he elected to spend the good part of a hard working year in the auditing department of the Standard Oil Offices in San Francisco, surely a strangely prosaic setting for this figure out of romance. But it was a success like everything the boy touched. A corporation is not expected to remember the individual, but four years after this, the President of the Standard Oil Company wrote to Lucile:

STANDARD OIL COMPANY,  
SAN FRANCISCO, May 31, 1917.

MY DEAR MRS. BRAY:

Answering your question as to Harry Butters' record while he was with this Company, I thought it best to get a report from the Auditor, not stating to him for what purpose I wished it. The following is what he says:—

"Our record on Henry A. Butters can best be given in the simple statement of what he was, and

what he did, during his short term of employment with the Company.

Entering the office in September, 1912, his service, in accuracy, quickness, and devotion to duty, was of the highest quality, and in competition with dozens of clerks—his predecessors and contemporaries—*he attained the best record which had ever been reached.*

In April, 1913, he became of age and left the service of the Company in order to assume the management of his property.

During his short time with us he made many friends, and it was with deep regret we let him go. Although much occupied with his new responsibilities, he did not forget his fellow clerks, but once in a while called in for a friendly chat, and on several occasions his kind remembrance was expressed in the more tangible form of large boxes of much-appreciated bonbons.

His last visit was on the day before leaving for England to enroll in the cause of the Allies."

Yours very truly,

—W. T. RHEIN.

There is something curiously mature in this young vital creature who so deliberately elected always the sane course for his own development. The wisest guardian could not have chosen more intelligently. Yet here was a boy with practically unlimited means, practically uncontrolled, seeing life, and his duties to his fellows and himself, as

conscientiously as a middle-aged philosopher, and with the chivalrous kindness of a Sir Galahad.

## XI

### THE FORTUNATE YOUTH

To be young, handsome, rich . . . above all, to be adored; to have inherited a well known name; to come of that clean English stock, which, dashed with Irish, we now recognise to make for the best American; to have a capacity for enthusiasm, idealism, and what some one has called the genius for friendship; to expand, physically and emotionally, in the generous Californian environment; here, surely, was the Fortunate Youth.

And when one sets his presentment in the series of vivid pictures which move across the ample stage, glow, and disappear . . . pictures of hot days on his Rancho San Stanislaus, the friends, Tom Evans and Ernie Percy, with him; of long journeys in the new car *Jolly Boat* from Ripon in the baking San Joaquin valley to the cool green of Piedmont, where Lucile's house was home; of Mare Island and St. Helena, in each of which places was the household of another sister; of his clubs, the *Family* and the *Olympic*, both typical San Francisco centres of the joy of life and youth (youth of all ages, one must add!)—of the



Hawaiian Islands, whence he returned blissfully on the S.S. *Manchuria* with the dear "Skipper," Captain Fleming, now her first officer; of Lake Tahoe, whither he motored Father Lacombe over the high Sierras; of the "Igloo," the little bachelor house he built himself on a corner of his Piedmont property, a tall hedge separating it from the big yellow Alta Vista; of San Mateo polo grounds, where he played a dashing game; of the walk, every Christmas Eve, under the California stars, to midnight mass . . . when one rebuilds these settings, and the gay young masterful creature strides through them . . . it is tempting to epitomize all this Golden West in the one radiant personality.

## XII

### BOLINAS

On the edge of the State, a third of the distance from the top of that seldom dented coast line which starts at Oregon and ends at Mexico, a tiny bay withdraws itself from the calm roll of the Pacific. A tiny village looks west to the unbroken sea horizon, toward China, and east toward unseen Tamalpais, extreme sentinel of these United States.

To Bolinas, and Bolinas Bay, it is some three hours from San Francisco, by the motor stage

which climbs the Marin hills, or by the motor boat which leaves the metropolis through the Golden Gate. Here Davy, guardian and half brother, had a summer cottage, and here Harry chose to spend his twenty-first birthday.

He called it the happiest day of his life.

It was characteristic of him to find this happiness in the affection of his family; the devotion of his friends; in the completion of a definite probation; (more than ever was he the young knight who had watched through the hours of darkness beside his armor); in the consciousness that he could now, as a man, confirm the intentions of a tenderly quixotic youth, and bring material as well as mental ease to such members of his family as needed it; in the sense that the overwhelming griefs of an earlier period were behind him.

It was also part of his seriousness that the softer attractions played no rôle for him. He had never been "in love." He was too busy, too absorbed, too happy. There was indeed one lovely vision to which his sense of beauty and fitness turned, rather than his heart. (One wonders how many feminine young hearts turned to him?) But later, not many weeks before his death, he could say, with his great laugh, that, honestly, he had never known the sensation; regretting it a little, perhaps, as the one drop till then missing from his deep draught of life.

## XIII

## THE TWENTY-FIRST BIRTHDAY

Harry came of age on the 28th of April, 1913.

Four years later some of us made the journey to Bolinas to spend the anniversary there.

It was easy to reshape the great day in those unchanged surroundings. There is still something resistant, unhumanized, if one may call it that, in the Californian landscape, even where men have made roads and walk about on them, built houses and live in them. Human occupation is too recent, the country too big and primitive. Pretty or sweet "bits" in the water-colorist's sense, do not exist. Men and women do not belong here, for all the gorgeous hospitality they are offered.

So Harry's birthday guests, fifteen in all, whom he brought by motor car over the Sausalito road, or round by more distant Tocaloma and Olema, must have seemed flutteringly over-civilized for Bolinas. Even the stodgy little motor boat, the *Owl*, which carried the wine and Harry's own glass and silver in the care of the two friends, Tom Evans and Ernie Percy; chugging a careful way through the Golden Gate, over the bar, up that coast (where nearly 300 years before Sir Francis Drake had missed the Bay of San Francisco in the fog) and by the narrow channel into Bolinas Lagoon . . . even the *Owl* must have seemed foreign, out of the picture.

But Harry himself, one likes to believe, fitted in. The adventuring type, cowboy or buccaneer, must ever disturb the least in this western setting. Harry's big noisy handsome personality, everywhere at once, laughing, directing, joyously contriving everybody's comfort, must have fallen naturally into the Californian frame.

The gay assemblage remained three days, and spent the time in walks, drives, and sea-bathing. The day itself touched high water mark in the birthday dinner at the little country hotel, Pomatto's. The rude dining room was literally embowered in roses, the decorations were Harry's old school colors. Pomatto gave them a royal meal. At the end a great cake was brought in, with twenty-one candles burning around it, and, a surprise for Harry, the Beaumont arms and "Aeterna non Caduca" cunningly elaborated upon it.

There were gifts from that young prince the host; and speeches in his honor that drew his tears. Looking down the long table at the beloved faces, realising the heritage, material and spiritual, that he had come into, counting on a limitless future of happiness and work, he might indeed mark this day with a white stone.

The last toast drunk, (Harry's own to his guardians, Lucile and Davy) the beautiful glasses, at his word, went crashing to the floor. And afterward, as they all sat in the firelit room adjoining, ready to separate, the boy suddenly crossed



BOLINAS



to Lucile, and kneeling simply, like a child, asked her blessing. . . .

"The happiest day of his life."

## XIV

### WAR

If the years had been full before his coming of age, they were full to over-running after. The bulk of his time the boy spent on his ranch in the San Joaquin, where his great friend Tom Evans, formerly a business associate of his father's and always a family intimate, was generally with him. - The salient points between April 1913, and August 1914, have been touched upon; the Honolulu trip; polo at San Mateo (an accident there, a broken arm); the twenty-second birthday with Lucile, motoring to the Santa Cruz Mountains in the *Jolly Boat*; and the Tahoe holiday, where he was arrested on a warrant of Stewart Edward White, the writer, for speeding.

He stood trial for this in Placerville, and was fined seventy-five dollars. Mr. Stewart Edward White wrote later, to Harry's sister:

DEAR MRS. BRAY:

I am very glad you felt like writing, for it gives me the chance to assure you that the "score

was square" from the moment when, in court, I had for the first time a chance to study your brother at close range. . . . Previous to this we all thought we had to do with a too common type—the arrogant buy-it-at-any-price youth. But in court we quite reversed our notion. . . . He seemed to us then as a boy of sensitive nature, romantic ideals, an almost quixotic sense of that vague something called *noblesse oblige*, and also, at the same time, a little unaware of his fellow human beings, and hovering between a spoiled life and one of more than ordinary significance. Strangely enough, our conclusion was unanimous . . . we liked him, we feared for him, we hoped for him. . . . If this seems unwarranted impertinence, please remember that it is real interest. I saw, some time since, that he had enlisted. He has the stuff in him, more than most.

Will you permit me to thank you again for writing as you did, for in that impulse I recognise the same spirit I admired in your brother.

Most sincerely,

STEWART EDWARD WHITE.

All this, which would at any other time have furnished endless banter in the lively family circle, was submerged in the sudden tide of war. Harry went to Placerville on August 25th, but three weeks before, on August 4th, England had entered the lists. To the old Beaumont boy, England's cause was *the* cause. Where most Americans felt passionately for France, nursing, perhaps uncon-





CAMPING OUT AT TAHOE



sciously, the old soreness against England, Harry realised in a flash the astounding English altruism.

America may have had some grievances; Ireland may have had many; but England, this time unhesitatingly, splendidly, played the game. Every drop of Harry's blood, American, English, French, Irish, ran like mad.

There was but one thing to do, to fight for England.

## XV

### DEPARTURE

Needless to say, there was opposition to his plans. The war was not our war. To most Californians, it might have been waging on the planet Mars. The President enjoined neutrality upon us, even in thought. The Germans amongst us, far from being potential enemies, were some of our nearest and best. And we had our own problems. Why concern ourselves with those of Europe?

But Harry saw his way clearly. The Rancho San Stanislaus was put in shape to leave. Other business was closed as peremptorily. There was a last walk with Lucile and Tom Evans to midnight mass on Christmas Eve. A last New Year's

celebration at St. Helena, with his sister, Marguerite. A last week at Mare Island with the Karmanys . . . (and Lucile always). Three or four days in Piedmont, at the Igloo, where he looked across at Alta Vista, wondering, perhaps, what that other Henry Butters, his father, would have said; certain that he would have done the same.

On February 4th, 1915, he started east. Davy, with the "Skipper," and Ernest Percy, left him at the Sixteenth Street Station in Oakland. He stood on the rear platform as the heavy *Overland Limited* drew away, his vivid face above the little crowd of passengers, flashing goodbye.

He was leaving his own . . . his friends, his family, his life; leaving his California, for a country 6000 miles away, and not his own.

*"Ubique quo Fas et Gloria Ducunt."*

*Motto of the Royal Field Artillery.*

## XVI

### ENGLAND

One Saturday afternoon in March, 1915, the telephone rang at Number 7 Lansdowne Road, in Holland Park, London. A cheery American voice announced that it was Harry Butters of Piedmont, with letters from friends there. Might he present them at once?

Bad luck! a weary hostess was engaged. Could he come next day? No, he must cross to Paris that same night.

A sigh. A hasty readjustment. Was there any woman in London those strenuous days who was not worked to the last ounce of time and energy? But this was a soldier . . . and soldiers came first. And this was a boy from home . . . unknown, to be sure, but Californian. So the Californian hostess:

"Of course. Come out at once."

And in half an hour the boy reached Number 7. He had time only for tea and some brief talk . . . such a big figure over the low tea table! Such a sparkling young personality in the long fire-lit room!

Had he friends on that side? "Yes, but far away in Wales and Gloucestershire."

When was he to return? "Next Tuesday."

Where would he be in London? "Oh, in some hotel."

Would he like to come to Number 7? (After all, Number 7 was a bit of California, and as such his to command.)

"Do you mean it? I certainly should!"

And so, casually and by the merest accident, Harry was made one of us.

Another boy, long before, had named the hostess *Stepmother*. Harry adopted this title at once. The children became his "step-sister and step-brother" from that moment. We knew curiously little of him or his circumstances. It was enough that he was Californian, that he had come to offer himself to England. There was brief chance to talk of anything but the present, and indeed, early 1915 was an anxious time, and nothing counted but essentials.

The hostess, finding violets, as lovely as Piedmont ones, every day on her desk, asked finally, what he planned to live on?

"On my pay, when I get it."

Must he work when he went home after the war?

"Yes indeed, hard!"

Very well, then, no more violets. And (firmly) shoes were to be resoled, not given away. Those very ones (just tied up for the Belgians), were to be taken round the corner for repairs.

"Oh, I say, I don't like resoled shoes! And the violets are only to remind you of home!"

But in another moment, with a dazzling smile,

"Right O, Stepmother! Whatever you say, goes!"

We did not know then how tremendously his home, and the home ties, counted for Harry. His friends, the Evanses, had made him delightfully welcome in Stow-on-the-Wold, and now Number 7 was to be his London haven. It was not long before his hostess could write to San Francisco:

"Last week was made lively by the enthusiastic presence of Harry Butters, of whom we have all grown so fond. He has become as much one of the family as people we have known and loved a dozen years. And in a curious way, he makes one conscious that, after all, the underlying sense of nationality is a very real bond. . . .

You know how many English men and boys I know, and love—and comes along this epitome of gaiety—tenderness—enthusiasm—astonishing capability—and charm of unreserve and chivalry—and you are surprised to see how you respond, and how pleased and flattered you are to be an American!

We gave the boy a good time—dinner at the Dickenses', a musical party at Mrs. Balfour's, a call on the Garvins; I sent him there by himself, and the Great Man gave him an hour alone—and was fascinating, as only Garvin can be.

"The nicest leave yet," he wrote, when he got back to camp."

## XVII

## OFF TO THE FRONT

That long summer of 1915 saw our Californian one of the million khaki-clad figures amongst us, whom we were so soon to find an old story, but ever with that touch of mystery which goes with death.

Some one, was it Prosper Merimée? wrote long ago, "Ah, les pauvres morts!" But we, looking on at the young creatures drilling, marching, endlessly coming and going through the London streets, thought "Ah, les pauvres vivants!" We did not say it . . . but when they passed, we could not meet one another's eyes.

Harry threw himself into the new work with all the old zest. He got his commission in March, spent the following months training at Shoreham, Salisbury Plain, and Farnham, and on the last day of August went triumphantly to France.

It was not possible to associate disaster with that vision of conquering youth . . . and we saw him go with fairly easy hearts.



**PART III**  
**LETTERS**  
**AND COMMENT**



# I

## LEAVING HOME

*To Lucile.*

OVERLAND LIMITED,  
February 4th, 1915.  
6 P. M.

DEAREST GOOKIE:

I knew I would have a bad time leaving Davy at 16th Street, and I did. I knew his eyes were watering all the way down and when I said "Good-bye" and pulled out, I went to my section in tears and sobbed a long time. It was only because he fears for me, and I can't fill him with my magnificent confidence, and my conscience hurts when I think of him—like the very devil, always.

You, my dearest of all dear hearts, I feel far nearer to at this minute than I have for a long time. I know how well, sorrowing though you may be for my six feet of material self, you feel the same.

I might have known you would fill my already sufficiently full pockets with more money—although it didn't even actually occur to me. I wonder how much of all I have, you have really "put up." I won't worry over the proportion though. I shall like always to think that on this trip Davy took everything off my hands at home, and that you sent me away of your own dear will.

Father George's book is the greatest inspiration in the world. Tell him so. I haven't time to write him now, but he understands.

Bon soir, dearest. In life and death we are together always. You are my constant inspiration and source of wonder. I will say the prayers you asked me to—a "Hail Mary" and the "Veni Creator" every night until I return.

HABS.

*To Lucile.*

ON BOARD R. M. S. "ADRIATIC,"  
17 Feb., 1915.

DEAREST GOOKIE:

Your wire was the first thing I read aboard—your dear long letter was finished after Davy's, and I thought would be my "dernier mot," when I was surprised at luncheon by your radio, which was the last word from home in American waters. I will show each to you again some day.

I too am glad that I finally did come on alone, although I am awfully fond of the old skipper and wanted him to come. If he stays on sailing out of San Francisco, you must have him over once in a while to cheer him up.

"Fortitude" was perfectly fine. I saved it to read aboard, and have devoted the whole voyage to it. I do indeed see myself in Peter Westcott's strife, and I too strive to "ride the Lion"—although the day must be far distant when I shall attain to the mastery. But I do hope and pray that

I shall either attain to it, or finish myself in the fight—that I may never slip into any easy peaceful submission.

Concerning the “traveller who would journey to the House of Courage,” I rather think that I set out on the journey into “the Land of Having all Things” never having lived in that of “Lacking all Things.” If that is so, all might still be right, and I have hopes that I have now passed through that land and am about to cross the border into the next country “of Having Lost All Those Things Which I Have Had” where “the Traveller’s Fortitude is most severely tried.” I suppose I will know very shortly now whether I really am this far along and if so, I hope to prove myself the very finest little single-handed Loser in the whole war zone.

Father Harvey’s message was certainly a bracer to me. Please give him my very kindest regards and sincere thanks for his remembrance in his daily Mass.

Salute “Joe” (the Chinese cook) for me and tell Gus (Lucile’s husband) that his farewell wire, besides showing the only flicker of humor I had over the wires (not that the other things weren’t far more precious) contained the most strictly-to-the-point word of advice that I have yet received. It was “Shoot Straight,” and that, after all, is the sum and total of all advice in life. Fail or succeed. Shoot crooked or shoot straight. *I am going to shoot straight!*

Au revoir, dearest—I am well under way—on the quest from which I shall bring you both far more than ever before.

Most affectionately,  
HABS.

## II

### GETTING A COMMISSION

*To David and Lucile.*

THE RECTORY,  
STOW-ON-THE-WOLD,  
GLOS.  
6 March, 1915.

DEAREST DAVE AND GOOKIE:

Let me first say, in order to set your minds at rest, that after sounding out every possibility and looking over all the ground from Beaumont to Paris, I have sent in my application to the War Office for a commission in the British Army for Active Service during the war, and that I have every hope that I shall be accepted and commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant, within the next couple of weeks.

Having settled your suspense, I can now go on to tell you the various steps which led up to this decision, but before I close this paragraph I want to explain that the reason why I have not written oftener since my arrival is that I wanted to cover all the ground and be able to tell you definitely just what job I was going after and what were the chances of my getting it, before I sent this first long letter. From now on I will send lines to each of you a couple of times a week, and if

you are troubled by any suspense as to their arrival, you had better watch the arrival of mail-boats at New York.

As a last word, before I begin the account of my activities since landing, let me say that I only returned to Stow yesterday, when I received all your letters—three from Gookie and one from Davy and read them, with you can imagine what delight. To know that Alta Vista is rented and more or less off your hands is a very great relief, but to hear how the Rancho is coming on is of even more interest, and I shall observe its development from Davy's letters with as great an interest as the progress of our own armies towards the River Rhine.

I arrived in London late on the evening of the 18th of February and went straight to the Metropole Hotel for dinner. There I found awaiting me a wire of welcome from Tom, bidding me come to Stow the next day.

At one-forty in the afternoon, I left for Stow-on-the-Wold, where Tom and Jack (the Rev. John Evans) met me and proceeded to make me most welcome. Jack is quite fatherly, very much interested, and Mrs. Evans shows a decided inclination to take me under her wing. As for the daughter, Alice, she is *all right*.

We spent four delightful days at Stow before I decided that I must be about my business, then Tommy left for Fishguard and I for Beaumont.

I arrived at Beaumont at four in the afternoon and sent my card up to Father Carey (my old master) and Captain Father Mayo (command-



ing the Officers' Training Corps). They both rushed down, delighted to see me—particularly my dear friend Father Carey—and took me in to tea. "Now," says I, "here I am—Came seven thousand miles of my own accord, and it's up to you to find some way to get me the *rest* of the way to the Front."

Well, Father Mayo and the Rector got their heads together, and decided that the best thing to do was to send me to Major Fuller, of the War Office, an old Beaumont boy whom they knew, so the Rector gave me a letter to him, and after a day with Father Carey, I went on to London.

That afternoon I determined to devote to finding out all about the Belgian Relief Commission, so knowing that Mr. Hoover would be a frightfully busy man, I first called on one of his partners, Mr. Edgar Rickard, who, much to my surprise, remembered me at once, and placed an hour of his time at my disposal. I told him of the circumstances of my coming across, of Davy's extreme desire that I should get into something other than the military end of things, and so forth, and asked him to give me an outline of their work, which he did, as follows:

They are furnishing bread to 7,000,000 people, 2,000,000 of whom are absolutely destitute. To do this requires a considerable office corps in London and Antwerp and about forty men in charge of distribution within the German lines. Every one of these men in Belgium is required to have considerable commercial knowledge, and to speak French fluently and also a little Flemish by prefer-

ence. Also, every man must be perfectly neutral in thought, word and deed. Any sign of prejudice is likely to imperil the right to feed seven million people. Mr. Rickard said they had no need of any more men for another two months and did not think that they would dare to take me on any way.

I left him to call on Mr. Hoover, who was also most cordial, read my letters of introduction from Uncle Charlie and George Hoffman, but said that they did not need any more men until the Rhodes Scholars were due back at Oxford towards the end of May. This put Belgian relief off the boards. To my pleasure, but your sorrow, I am afraid.

That evening, Thursday, one week from landing and three from the date of my departure from Sixteenth Street, I called on Major Fuller of the War Office at his home, and presented my letter from Beaumont.

He was very busy, but came out to see me for a moment.

Ten days later I walked into Uncle Charlie's office in the morning and found a letter "On His Majesty's Service" awaiting me. I breathed a soft prayer, said to myself, "Here's where we get it where the chicken got the axel!"—and opened the letter.

It contained a large blue four-paged form—and a letter from Major Fuller.

At eight o'clock that night, February 27th, I left Victoria Station for Paris, and arrived at the Gare St. Lazare a little before ten.

I went straight to the boys' (his cousins, Arthur and Laurence Schell) new offices at 9 Ave. de l'Opera, but found they would not be in for an hour, so I walked down the Rue de Rivoli to the Tuileries and on into the Place de la Concorde to salute the statue of Strasbourg, heaped high with wreaths and flowers, and bearing the flags of Belgium, France and England in battle array.

To put the accomplishments of the Paris trip in brief:

I was advised by the boys to have nothing to do with the French Army, as there were no commissions given; and that the only place for an American was in the Legion Etrangère where the fifteen hundred American Volunteers had been put, split up into companies of twenty or thirty men.

The return across the Channel was equally uneventful (Arthur's boat was shot at by torpedo entering Folkestone harbour the week before) except that I met some rather decent American Red Cross men.

I have already told you that I called on Mrs. O'Sullivan the afternoon I left for Paris and found her most charming and hospitable. She has since been even more so, putting me in touch with influential people to help my job along, and insisting that I make her house my home in London. I think that this will probably turn out to have been the only introduction out of my many that I have made use of—and Mrs. O'Sullivan will have accomplished everything for me.

That night, the second of March, I stayed with

her, and the next day went on back to Beaumont, where the Rector filled out two pages of my application for commission, vouching for my moral character and standard of education, and Father Mayo filled in the Cadet Corps service certificate. The next thing was to see the colonel of a regiment, who must have a talk with me and decide that I was a fit man to hold His Majesty's Commission—when he would nominate me for the job. And it was, of course, important that I should go to some one who would know whence I came and that I was all right, and who would not pick any flaws with my American accent. From the Rector I found that the best man was Colonel Curtiss, commanding the 11th Warwickshire battalion at Brighton, himself an old Beaumont boy, who drew somewhat on the school O. T. C. for his junior officers when they could spare them.

I returned to Mrs. O'Sullivan's that night.

On Thursday morning, March 4th, my lucky day and just four weeks from my departure, I went down to Brighton and found Colonel Curtiss of the 11th Warwickshire. He was very kind and talked to me for some time. I gave him the family history and he nominated me at once, telling how glad he was to be able to do it for an old Beaumont boy and telling me that I would find a great many schoolfellows sprinkled through every branch of the service.

As every infantry officer must be able to ride, he asked me about this particularly; and when I told him that I had always ridden and was used to handling horses both in the stable and on the

road, he said he would very probably put me on the guns (artillery) when I came to him. He told me to be prepared for six to eight months' training before being sent on to the front, but I think that was a little bit of an exaggeration.

From Colonel Curtiss, I went up for my medical examination, which I passed in just forty seconds, having first rate chest expansion, a forty horse power heart and eyes that see in the dark. Half an hour later, properly signed and O.K.'d by every one required, in excellent order, my application went into the post in one of the Colonel's envelopes, registered, to the War Office on His Majesty's Service.

From Brighton I went on to St. Leonard's-on-Sea, where I spent the night with Woggles (Mr. Murray Ogilvy). He was in fine health and spirits and anxious to be remembered to you all.

I returned to London the next day, March 5, and got to Mrs. O'Sullivan's in time for tea. As soon as she greeted me, she asked me right off if I had my commission, and I was able to tell her that the application had gone in.

"Well," said she, "if you haven't got it, I think I have it for you!" and went on to say that Edmund Davis, a power in the World of Finance, and an old partner of Cecil Rhodes, and a friend of hers who lived just two doors away in one of the most beautiful houses in London, was looking for a man on behalf of Captain Osborne, Adjutant of the Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry (a crack territorial cavalry regiment) to take a com-

mission there. He must ride like the devil and be a gentleman.

I was therefore immediately sent over to interview Mr. and Mrs. Davis and *he* remembered Papa—had known him in London twelve years ago through Wernher Beit! They immediately wired Osborne about me (the regiment was stationed in Southport, north of Liverpool) and the following morning the answer came.

“Colonel will endeavour to hold open vacancy. Write full particulars at once. If satisfactory will see Butters.”

So, Mr. Davis sat down, and asking me for particulars, wrote a fair sketch of my specifications. At the last he asked me if I had any income and I told him that I hadn't seen a sou from my father's estate since last April and didn't expect to for several years. Now, as this was a very flush regiment, this looked bad, but he said he would ask Osborne about it. Davis was most surprised and wanted to know how it had come about that I was so poor, so I described the Northern Electric—Natomas crash to him. (Harry was drawing at this time from his mother's estate only, and to a very limited extent.)

That afternoon I returned to Stow to await telegraphic news from Osborne, either that it was all off, or that I was to come on.

All of the family—including the maid—were really and truly delighted to have me back and Mrs. Evans immediately began to spoil me again.

So for two days I had a very jolly time indeed, and Tom was sent for to come up from Fishguard. Then on Monday morning came a wire from Mr. Davis telling me to proceed to Southport at once and see Capt. Osborne.

It was a very long journey, four changes, and I did not get there until seven o'clock that night. I went to the Prince of Wales Hotel, where a room was engaged for me, and proceeded to have a wash and brush up.

Captain Osborne and Colonel Hardcastle came in about eight o'clock and we went right in to dinner.

They were both as nice and kind as they could be, and what should turn up but that Captain Osborne also knew Papa quite well in London! and was last year himself concerned in Natomas—so he treated me throughout in a very fatherly manner as the son of an old friend.

Of course I had my accent pretty well toned down for the occasion (Harry's accent was American of the Americans) and everything went beautifully. At coffee we got down to business, and I started the question "Were they going to the Front in Europe?" and "When did they expect to be sent on?"

In regard to the first, the Colonel thought it extremely unlikely—in fact, considered it probable that they would be sent to Turkey after the forcing of the Dardanelles. As regarded the second question, they had just received word that day that they would not leave Southport until the first

of May, and that then it would only be to go under canvas here at home.

Of course, I told them that I had come over to get somewhere in the front of the major operations, and that at present it hardly seemed likely that there would be any anywhere except on the European Battle Front.

To make a long story short, it came down to this, that they would be glad to give me the job; but the fact that the chances of getting to the Front were so slim, (coupled with what I could see with my eyes, that my expenses with their mess would be more than my pay would cover,) forced me to refuse it.

I did not, however, lose the opportunity to get their advice as to what would be my best chances of getting on, and Captain Osborne, being very much interested, called up the Mess, introduced me and proceeded to talk it over with the senior officers. They discussed one scheme after another, all of them requiring several months' time and numerous difficulties until some one mentioned the Royal Flying Corps. Immediately Captain Osborne became most excited and enthusiastic, and you can imagine I did myself, because had I had the slightest idea that there was any possible chance for an outsider to get into their blue ribbon arm of the service, I should have gone straight after it in the first place. Osborne said he thought it would be easy to get into, as they were building planes as fast as ever they could, and did not find it easy to get men; that he knew nothing about the procedure, but that if he were a young man



he would most certainly go for it in preference to the crackest of crack cavalry regiments in the service. Finally, he gave me a letter to his nephew, a Mr. Geach, at the Automobile Club in London, who was in the Cavalry, but who was going to transfer into the Flying Corps.

The next morning they took me out for a long ride to watch the cavalry manœuvring, and at noon I left for London, via Liverpool.

I got in that night and went to a hotel for dinner, then out to call on Mrs. O'Sullivan and she made me stop with her.

In the morning I went over to see Mr. Davis and report to him on my visit to Captain Osborne. I told him all about it, including the Flying Corps suggestion, and he at once said that that would be *easier* for him to get me, and that he was going to see the Admiralty in the afternoon and would find out something for me.

At ten o'clock I called on Geach at the Automobile Club and he gave me the following information:

They are building very many aeroplanes and are finding it a little difficult to get men, as many are a little bit awed constitutionally, of the air (as a matter of fact, of course, the casualties in the Flying Corps have been infinitely less in this war than in any other branch of the service).

There are two branches—the Royal Flying Corps (Army) who do observation over the battle front and a certain amount of fighting—and the Royal Naval Aircraft Service (Navy), who are quartered on the Channel and make raids on sub-

marine bases, forts, etc., etc., and sometimes engage the enemy's machines. I think these are seaplanes entirely, rising from and lighting on, the water.

To get in one has to be accepted by the Admiralty Air Board and pass a rigid medical exam for heart, lungs and sight. You are then sent to one of the coastal flying stations where, regardless of whether you have never flown or are the best civilian pilot in the country, you have to take the full flying course. This takes up expert practical flying, a complete study of the engine, some navigation, a study of air currents, practice in bomb dropping, the rapid fire aeroplane gun, pistol shooting, map observing and map making.

It sounds a lot, doesn't it?

And I suppose that to cover it all will take quite a few months, but the thing is, as soon as you become a confident and able pilot, you are attached to your squadron of twelve machines under a squadron commander, given your machine and observer and are on active service. Rank as an officer, but on probation like a midshipman, and do not receive your commission for about six months. The pay is high, you have (usually) all night in a warm bed, plenty of baths, the healthiest work in the world, no danger of being cut up or crippled and very long leaves of absence—I think a month or two on duty, then a month off.

You are the very cream of the service, the blue ribbon and everybody loves you and admires you and envies you and entertains you—or words to that effect.

So much for that, and as I haven't got the job yet and may still be with the Warwickshire guns instead, I will not go into the great vista that I see the Aircraft Service opening up for H.A.B. personally, but will wait until I am definitely started in the work. I must only take time to say here that I have felt very strongly since I got over here—even more so than when I was leaving home—that I am catching the crest of the wave in that tide in the affairs of men which, taken at its flood, leads on to fortune. I looked for that before I left home, and so did you, but you looked for it to come in one way, and I in another; and it looks as if we were both way off. I told you that I am not wedded to any one scheme, but that I knew that the opportunity would make itself plain to me sometime when I got over here and I think that it is doing so just now. I will write in much more detail about this particular side of the matter as soon as I get started in the work, and I will reconcile your minds to it very much more completely. At present, I myself am only conscious of a very great hope and a feeling of magnificent confidence, but long, long plans will keep opening up ahead, inspiring to think upon.

Edmund Davis has written Admiral Slade for a letter of introduction for me to Captain Saetor, Chief of the Air Department at the Admiralty, and I have come back to Stow to await word that it has arrived, which I hope will come to-morrow.

In all probability then, Tom and I will be going up to London for several days, on Monday. I to try to land this Flying Commission and he to

work up his Belgian scheme with Hoover and Mrs. O'Sullivan, who is also closely connected with the refugee work in that country. If he cannot start this grand scheme of his, and I greatly fear that the times are not propitious, he should have no difficulty in getting his commission in the Army Service Corps.

And now I want to get this aboard to-morrow's steamer, so with a world of love, au revoir for a few days.

Always most affectionately,  
HABS.

Of course, I can fly an aeroplane in half an hour's time—I have always known this.

*To David and Lucile.*

THE RECTORY,  
STOW-ON-THE-WOLD,  
GLOS.  
21 March, 1915.

DEAREST DAVE AND GOOKIE:

Just a week since I mailed the thirty-two page letter with all my ventures up to that date, and to-day is the first chance I have had to sit down and send you the first result of them all—which is good—but quite different from what I expected to give you.

Know then, that on the 12th of March I was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant, and attached to the 11th Battalion of the Royal Warwickshires

(Infantry) the 7th line regiment of the regular army. I have already joined, but am on a week's leave until Wednesday the 24th. I am also in khaki until the end of the war.

I think I mailed your letter a week ago yesterday. Well, the following (Sunday) morning, I found an official letter in the post which upon being opened disclosed the following:

"WAR OFFICE,  
LONDON, S. W.  
12 March.

SIR:

I am directed to inform you that you have been appointed to a temporary Second Lieutenancy in the New Army.

You have been posted to the 11th Service Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regt., and should join that unit for duty at Brighton. On receipt of this communication you should report yourself by letter or telegram to the Adjutant of your Battalion.

Expenses incurred in travelling to join on first appointment must be paid by yourself.

You should draw your outfit allowance from your Army Agents or Paymaster and should provide yourself with bedding and camp kit before joining.

I am,

Sir, etc.

[(Signed) E. W. M. NARIE,  
Colonel,  
Ass't Military Sec'y.]

There were two inclosures, one being a schedule of pay and allowances, and the other a list headed "Field Kits of Dismounted Services."

I took the first train to London and went straight to Mrs. O'Sullivan's. Gave her the news, then went over to Mr. Edmund Davis (who, you will recollect, sent me up to Southport to the Duke of Lancaster's Own and was looking up the Flying Corps for me) and told him also. I made it plain that I must report for duty the next day, but that I should probably be granted some leave, and asked him to see all his people at once if possible, and see what he could do to shift me into the air.

Next morning (Monday) I went down to Brighton and on twenty minutes further to Shoreham, where the Warwicks are quartered in a devil of a big camp.

I reported to the Adjutant, told him that I was just looking up the Flying Corps and asked him what I should do. He told me to take forty-eight hours' leave, and to apply for as much more as I needed. So I came straight back to London and applied for a week, which I received word two days later was sanctioned.

In the next two days Edmund Davis got replies to his letters, and some good people connected with the Admiralty, and I went down to the Royal Aircraft Factory at Farnborough, and saw the manager and the officials of the Military Wing of the Air Service. I will not bother you with the different ramifications of the search, because since it is off the boards, I have completely lost interest in it, for I am incapable of crying over

spilt milk—I will only give you the sum of what we found out—thus:—

First—I would have been unsuccessful in the first place in my attempt for the Naval Wing on account of my American citizenship, because the navy grants no temporary commissions and is doing no recruiting to speak of. In the second place, it was at any rate impossible, being already commissioned in the Army to get transferred to the Navy.

Second—I had not thought anything about the Military Wing, which (I believe) is used more extensively for observation purposes than any other, and did not like it particularly when I came to think of it. I probably could arrange a transfer into it, but it would be extremely indefinite as to whether it would be weeks or months before the transfer would come around to my turn, and in the meantime I should be very much in suspense as to what I was going to do, and would be training for the infantry without much heart in my work. Therefore, I gave up the idea entirely. The funny part of it is that the commission, which I hold, came to me without the smallest influence being brought to bear, of its own accord, eight days after I mailed the application from Beaumont College—and most men have been a month or even very much longer in getting theirs. So I've got it and shall go to the work of my training immediately upon the expiration of my leave.

I have found out that I am one of a list of forty supernumerary officers attached to the 11th

Battalion, so I shall probably be transferred in a few weeks to the 3rd Reserve Battalion, stationed on the Isle of Wight, and as this is the one from which the drafts are being drawn for the front, I shall hope with good luck to be sent on sometime in June or July, with fifty or sixty men.

As soon as I found that I had the week's extra leave, I sent for Tom to come to London and we stayed three days at the Cecil. We had an awfully decent visit, and in fact are enjoying all of our time together. You can imagine that we talk of you constantly.

I don't know that there is a great deal more to say. I shall be here at Stow through tomorrow, and shall go on to Brighton on Tuesday, so as to have a day in which to get my camp kit and myself installed in my quarters, meet the Mess and spy out the lay of the land before I report for duty at 2.00 P. M. on Wednesday.

Colonel Curtiss, who organized the battalion and who nominated me for my commission, has turned over his old servant to me, and given me introductions to most of the junior officers.

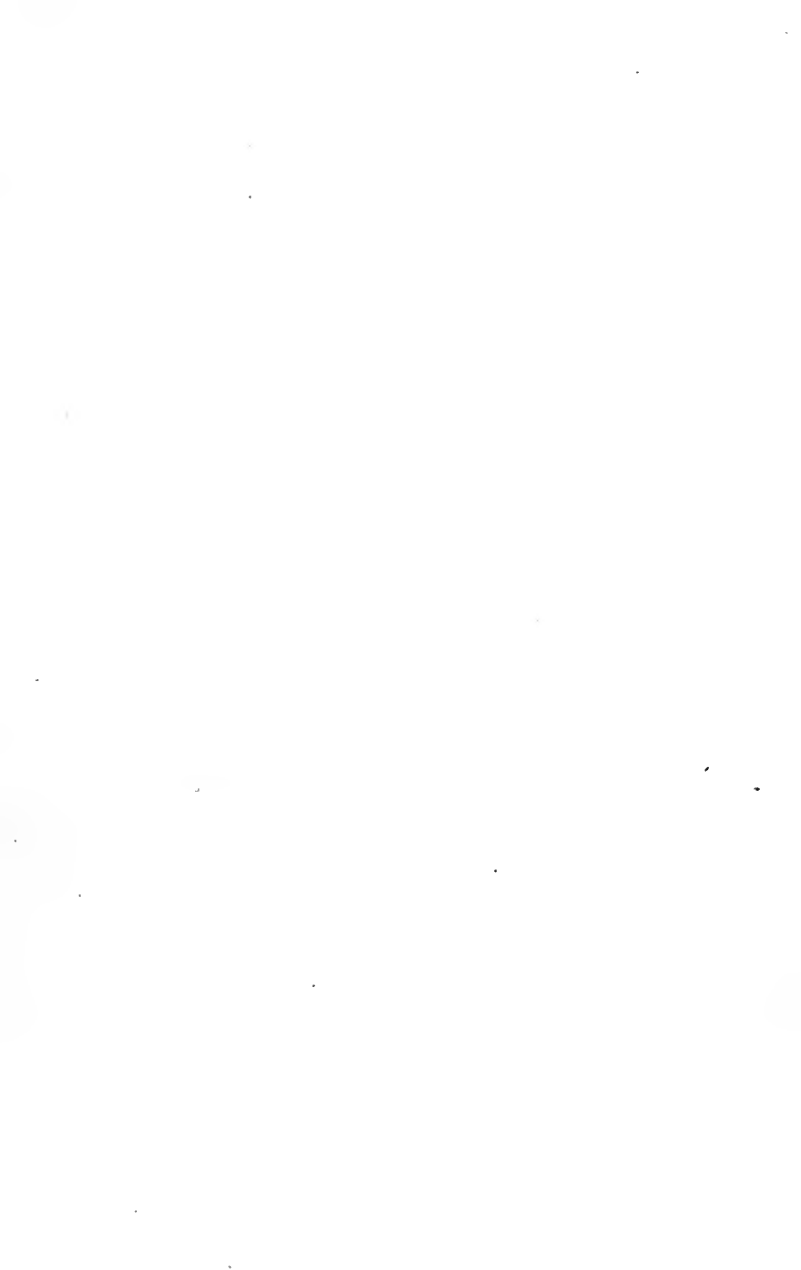
I draw 7s. 6d. a day in addition to quarters, light, heat, and rations—or just what we pay scraper-hands on the Ranch—"a dollar six bits and found." I also draw £50—allowance to purchase my kit.

Now, my dearest guardians, I came over here to get into the war and get to the front—that part at least I think you understood. So I have gotten





ARRIVAL AT STOW-ON-THE-WOLD



the place that my whole nature has been *hollering* for me to take ever since the war opened, and I believe that it is the right job for me. I believe that I need the experience of this war and that great good will come out of it. I believe it so hard that I *know* it.

I have thought of you as well as of myself in going after it. Gookie will believe this, but Davy will be incredulous—Nevertheless, it is so, Old Man, I have. In order to be the pride to you that you want me to be (I say pride because Heaven and you both know that I will never be a comfort), it is necessary for me to go on a very long journey through strange lands where all sorts of experiences will knock what is false out of my character, and weld and temper the fine part that is left, into the man that I ought to be. This journey for me is the War. I have known it since August, and have worked ever since, as you know, with the one end—to have my part in it. And now that I have got it, I am happy. I go as an officer in a fine regiment—that ought to be some consolation to you anyhow.

Fondest love,  
HABS.

### III

#### IN TRAINING

*To Lucile.*

11TH ROYAL WARWICKSHIRE,  
SHOREHAM CAMP,  
29 March, 1915.

DEAREST GOOKIE:

I have been busy with the start of my training for a week. I hope to get up for a two weeks' course of instruction at Chelsea Barracks, London (staying with my dear Mrs. O'Sullivan) and after that to transfer to the 3rd Reserve Battalion of either the Warwickshires or some other regiment now at the front in France. This will mean that I will not have to wait for the whole battalion to be ready, but will have the chance to get out to the front with a draft of men sometime in June or July. For the present, I am comfortably billeted here in the town.

Yours and Davy's answer to my cable, which I received this morning, is far and away the best and brightest and most encouraging word I have had yet and has made me feel absolutely *right*. I am satisfied that you, dearest, understand all things that I do, to a greater extent even than you yourself realize. I only mean by this that you

*feel* things about me that you yourself admit being unable to explain. But I want Davy too at least to be happy over what I am doing.

I can't tell you how frightfully good Jack and Mrs. Evans and Alice are to me. I have my room there all set up all the time that I am away to come back to, and Stow is really a home on this side.

Alice and Mrs. Evans are knitting sox for me and otherwise looking after my bodily needs.

Father Carey, I told you from Paris, had your letter and we had a long talk over it. I told him that he must be sure to write you every time he saw me because he would prove the most sympathetic mouthpiece on this side of the water to sing my praises to you. He is an awfully good chap and a dear friend—and very much fascinated by your handwriting.

To go back to your letter to him, which he did not read to me, but of which he told me the contents, it was your idea that I might possibly at this time be leaning back towards the Church, in which case, as Father Tim said, now was certainly the time of all times to return to the Sacraments.

Now you know, dearest, that I would rather tear myself in four pieces than willingly to give you pain, but this is after all the *great thing* that there can be no quibbling about, the thing that I must face squarely, and in unimpeachable sincerity, and I can only tell you the truth as I see it.

And for me, dearest heart, the Church is far more impossible to return to to-day than it was the day that I first left it, when I felt that I was

no longer of its faith in articles of doctrine. It is no good, dear—you must continue to have faith in me and in my spiritual progress alone as I stand. And you must not think that there is call for you to sorrow over a hurt that I have received or a quandary that I am in—because I am happy and hopeful in my own faith (which after all is pretty largely the same as your own) and have no fear of the future.

As this is the most important thing I had to say to you, I am going to close with it. I shall write you every time I get the chance from now on, whether short or long, irrelevant or very much to the point. I am going to make it a habit to pick up my pen and dash off a page at night over any little thing that has happened during the day.

But this is all now, except love and kisses from  
HABS.

*To Lucile.*

BRIGHTON,  
9 April, 1915.

DEAREST GOOKIE:

Your prayers have prevailed to land me onto what is going to turn out to be the best job in the whole army.

I have been attached to the Royal Field Artillery, pending permanent transfer. I am mounted again, and going back into boots and breeches; and I have made three friends in the Divisional Staff—two Majors and one General, Sir Godfrey

Thomas. As I got these friends without a shade of an introduction, it must be as I said at the start of this letter—that your prayers have prevailed!

I had to over-ride the Warwickshire regiment and the 73rd Brigade's express orders to get the job, and I have enjoyed the taste of my first whack at official medicine mixing.

I will write the whole thing in detail as soon as I have time, but I wanted to get away this word to you to-night to let you know of my great luck and my extravagant elation over it.

Good-night, dearest,  
HABS.

### *A General Letter.*

PRINCE'S HOTEL,  
BRIGHTON,  
14 April, 1915.

DEAREST DAVE AND GOOKIE:

In my last "general" letter, I told of my appointment to a commission in the Infantry (Warwickshire Regiment) and in a later personal one to Davy I outlined my plan of action to get the start of my infantry training at the Chelsea Barracks' drill course, and as soon after as possible to transfer to a 3rd reserve battalion, whence I should have the chance to get on to the front inside of a couple of months, with a draft of men to fill out some gap in the regiment.

From the start, I found myself misplaced in the infantry, but still I thought that it was far better to get to the front on foot, than to stay on this

side of the Channel for another six months, and perhaps never get out at all in the cavalry—and somehow, all the time I felt that it would all come right. How it has come so, I have already written Gookie in brief, but it should be new to the rest of you and my letter to her lacked all details. So I will go ahead with the yarn.

I think it was on the 2nd of April, after I had been a week at Shoreham, that I attended a brigade lecture in the evening by a man who had just returned from five months at the front and been attached to the Staff of the 24th Division. This was Major Claud A. Potter of the Royal Field Artillery.

I hadn't been listening to him and his account of the artillery work at the front, for more than ten minutes, before I decided that the guns were the place for Habs and that he was going to get on to them as quickly as ever he knew how.

I did not stop to consider the means, nor the fact that to transfer from one branch of the British Army to another is a most momentous matter, requiring almost an act of Parliament to put it through—I saw only that I had finally run across the work that I was really cut out for, and that it was up to me to grab it.

Major Potter seemed, from the platform, to be a most charming fellow and quite approachable, so after the lecture I bolted up and collared him before he had a chance to break away—asked if he could spare me five minutes any time within the next two or three days, and was told to come to Division Headquarters any time during hours.



I went the next afternoon, immediately after parade.

Major Potter did not come in for a few minutes after my arrival and when he did, he asked me to tea, so that I had ample opportunity to develop my point. I gave him my whole yarn in brief, laying particular stress on the fact that I had come over expressly to take a cavalry commission, but had given it up and gone into the infantry so as to be sure of getting to the front, ending up with the inspiration his lecture had given me to get into the artillery, and asked him how I was to go about my transfer.

After thinking it over a little while, he told me the procedure—namely that my application would have to go in, in quadruplicate, accompanied by a new medical certificate to my commanding officer, who would have to nominate me, and send the application to the Brigade headquarters, who would forward it to Division headquarters, who would send it on to the War Office, where it would lie for a few weeks or months until room was found for me in some Division of Artillery. *But*, if I could find a General commanding a Division willing to take me, and pin his letter of acceptance to my application, there would be no reason why it should not go through in short order. And by the same token, he (Major Potter) wished he could get me into the 24th Division here, but he did not think that there was much chance. He would find out, however, and let me know in a day or so. I went away not greatly encouraged, but still quite confident, to await his word.

(Three days later Woggles [Mr. Murray Ogilvy] arrived to spend Easter with me and remained through the somewhat exciting events which follow. We had a bully time together and he has written Gookie about it.)

On Easter Monday morning, following out a letter to the same effect which he had written me a couple of days before, Major Potter sent for me, and gave me a letter to Brigade Major Roberts of the 24th Division of Royal Field Artillery in Brighton, who would introduce me to General Sir Godfrey Thomas, commanding the Division—and after that it would be up to Habs.

Major Potter was sorry to say that the chances were very slim, as there had been a couple of fresh officers posted only the day before—nevertheless it was a chance, he wished me success, and would be greatly interested to hear how it should turn out, and I was to tear into it.

Needless to say, I made up my mind that I was going to talk a job out of Godfrey, if it took me all day. I summoned my forces.

At noon exactly, I strode into Division Headquarters (R. F. A.) and presented my letter to Brigadier Major Roberts. The General would not be in for half an hour, so we chatted pleasantly during that time on subjects ranging from the intense anti-German sentiment in the United States, to the latest news from the Dardanelles, not to mention the whole of my own trouble over again.

Then, Sir Godfrey came in.

As I had my hat off, I did not salute him. I

bowed very low instead and waited for him to speak.

Major Roberts collared him and for a couple of minutes I could hear him in very low tones evidently giving an account of me. At the end of that time the General looked pleasantly across the room at me and asked—

"You want to transfer to the Artillery, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I don't suppose there will be any difficulty, what? You know how to make out your application?"

"Yes, sir."

"All right."

"Will you take me then, sir?"

"Eh? Why, yes. I suppose so. I suppose you're all right, aren't you?"

"As far as I know, sir—I'll certainly be a handy man for you to have."

"All right."

"Thank you, General. Can you give me any idea of how long my transfer will take to go through?"

"Oh, that may take several weeks, but you had better apply for leave pending transfer and come over here and start your work at once."

"I will, sir. Thank you very much, and good-bye," and I dashed out into the street and grabbed Woggles around the waist and danced him down to the street corner—hollering into his ear—"I got it"—"Thank God"—"To Hell with Germany"—and a few other such bursts of pent-up emotion and gratitude.

It was just as simple as that, after all.

Now, three days later, on Friday, the 7th of April, the Warwickshires were to move to a desolate spot on Salisbury Plain for a month's training under canvas, preparatory to the battalion's leaving for the front (supernumerary officers to be left in England, of course) so, as the last thing in the world that I wanted to do was to accompany them, I lost no time in sending in my application for transfer to the R. F. A. to the Adjutant—accompanied by the request for leave pending transfer as per General Thomas' advice. When I did not hear from this by Thursday morning, I began to get anxious and started a little investigation, but could find out nothing until two o'clock, when the Assistant Adjutant came up to me after lunch and in a leisurely tone of voice announced,

"Oh, Butters, your application for leave has been refused. The brigade has returned it with a very emphatic minute to the effect that they cannot forward it, as the Division has already refused to consider any requests for leave of this nature. You will have to accompany the battalion to Salisbury Plain and await the time of your transfer."

I said "The hell I will!" but I must say I felt sick because I had just about three hours ahead in which to get the Division to reverse their orders to the Brigade, and for them to get fresh orders through to me before the offices should close.

However, I started out for Divisional Head-

quarters on the double and broke through to my dear and ever kind Major Potter's sanctum where I proceeded to detail my troubles.

He immediately got the wires hot to General Thomas to put him onto the Divisional Staff. Unfortunately, he could not locate either the General or any one else at the moment, but he put Central on to hunt them up in whatever part of the country they should be, and told me to come back later in the afternoon.

I journeyed forth to a couple of hours' acute worry, but when I returned, his greeting was:

"Everything is all right, and you are attached to Royal Artillery, pending permanent transfer."

I was incoherent in thanking him, for I had been under a rotten suspense and I only remember telling him that I was more grateful to him than to any one that I had ever met in my life, and that I was going to thank him by making myself the best officer that he ever arranged a transfer for.

He smiled and said that I was talking nonsense—but quite seriously to you, my dearest folks, I surely meant it.

The next morning, as the Warwickshires entrained for Salisbury Plain, I took the train for Brighton, and Woggles left me to return to St. Leonards. I reported again to Major Roberts, who posted me to the Divisional Ammunition Column for the present under Colonel Talbot.

Here I found the two sections at Brighton to contain about two hundred and forty men with six subalterns to handle them, so I knew that my

training was about to start at last, and was filled with joy in anticipation.

Every day since, I have either been Orderly Officer with about sixteen miles of inspections to make—stables, men's billets, guard room, etc., spread out all over the town—or else I have had charge of about fifty men all day on different parades and drill, with only one competent non-commissioned officer, a small part of the time, to teach me. So I have come on fast.

Already I have the dismounted drill well in hand, and have gotten well along with the (dummy) driving drill. I am beginning to be able to read semaphore signals, and when it has come to tent-pitching and horse-picketing, I believe I can give even the General cards and spades.

Very soon I hope to go down to Shoeburyness for my four weeks' gunnery course, (at which I have every intention of making a record), and when I return from it and am able to have a couple of weeks with the gun teams inspanned I will be ready to take the field. When that day comes, I shall again go after my dear Major and get him to rustle me the best job going for the front. But for the present, and until then, I can have no room for any thoughts other than to learn this job, if possible, a little more thoroughly and a little more quickly than it has ever been done before.

Don't, I beg of you, my dearest folks, take this letter to be boastful or puffed up. I am pleased with myself, yes, but I am far more grateful to the Bon Dieu for the magnificent luck that

He has sent me in answer to your prayers, and the exuberant tone of this letter is accountable directly to the tremendous enthusiasm I have for this work, an enthusiasm, I must tell you, that is far greater than I have ever had for any thing that I have ever tackled.

I have accomplished in the last few days, something that I have never reached before in my life.

I have struck my gait.

Always most affectionately,

HABS.

*To Lucile.*

24TH DIVISIONAL AMMUNITION COLUMN, R. F. A.

HAPPY VALLEY CAMP,

SHOREHAM-BY-SEA,

5 May, 1915.

DEAREST GOOKIE,

You were quite right in surmising that I heard Mass on Easter—also the morning service on Good Friday. These two, and Christmas Eve at midnight, I never like to miss.

Mrs. O'Sullivan is most constantly good to me. The last thing before he was hurt, she was trying to get a job for Tommy. Her house is always open to me in town, and I am officially acknowledged as one of her "step-sons."

No, my dearest—I can never cease to be duly grateful for the absolutely thundering good luck that has been mine. My own part has been to

miss no single opportunity that promised to be an aid to the attainment of my object. But I verily believe that your dear prayers have been the direct cause of the opportunities coming into being.

Sonny's (Davy's boy) remark about the dragon was surely cunning. Tell him that if he never forgets his uncle Habs, he will get something at least remotely akin to a dragon on my return. It may be a German or even possibly a Turk—but we'll not make any promises as to its exact nature, but wait until we see what the European Dragon market discloses during the campaign.

And now, dear, send a little note to Major Claud Potter, R. F. A., 24th Div. Staff Hdqs., Shoreham-by-Sea. He is the man who made it possible for me to get into the artillery and to whom I am so very, very grateful. Just tell him that you are my American sister and that you share my gratitude. I hope some day to serve under him.

Devotedly,

HABS.



To—

Bray Bros., (Lucile's husband and his brother)  
200 Sacramento St.,  
San Francisco, U. S. A.

24TH DIVISIONAL AMMUNITION COLUMN,  
ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY,  
9 May, 1915.

BELOVED "TWO HUNDRED,"

How good of you all to chip in on that bully round-robin! It surely did bring back old times and was no end of a source of pleasure to me.

You must not talk about my being home soon, because I will not come into the office again for a very long time, and in the meanwhile I don't want to think of you all as being too far away. The talk of the end of the War being in sight is arising out of such things as the women's peace conferences, which mean nothing to those who are bound together as the representatives of humanity in this war against the German legions of Hell. I apologise for the high-flown language which I don't like to use, but just at the present moment I am shocked by the horrible fate of the beautiful *Lusitania* with her hundreds of civilian lives—*American lives*—a great number of them, yet Heaven only knows what our Government will answer.

One thing only is sure at the present time. Peace will not come until its terms can be dictated by one side or the other as the complete and overwhelming victor. I do not believe Germany can

beat us, but I know that it will take us a very long time to beat Germany. England has not yet begun to fight, and until we are strong enough to take the main offensive, there can be no gain whatever. Whether we shall be able to do so at all this year is doubtful, but dating from the time when we are able to commence, we have no idea that less than a full year will pass over our heads in the march to Berlin, and far more likely two years. Take it from me, all other thoughts at this time are *R O T*—the hopes of fools, pure and simple.

Think of me often at the corner of Gin-Rickey Alley and Highball Street, for I understand that Lloyd George is going to cut off all our booze on this side for the period of the War.

Most affectionately,

H. A. B.

### *A General Letter.*

DIVISIONAL AMMUNITION COLUMN,  
ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY,  
SHOREHAM-BY-SEA,  
9 May, 1915.

MY DEAREST FOLKS,

The first thing I found in Brighton was that I could not go for my month's gunnery course until I was gazetted from the War Office as permanently transferred to R. F. A., and as this did not come until May 5th, I have already had a month with the guns. The first two weeks I was

in Brighton, I billeted at Prince's Hotel; the second week at a little place called Kingston, four miles down the Coast, billeted in a private home, and then a week ago we (the Divisional Ammunition Column) together with two of the four artillery brigades in the Division, moved back here into the same camp that I was in with the Warwickshire Regiment.

Here I have a little room in one of the officers' huts, which, with my field furniture of folding cot, table, chair and workstand, a sea-bag of bedding and a suitcase of personal belongings and clothes, I have made very comfortable.

I have a soldier servant to look after my things, but I don't keep him very busy. I have a good horse, and a groom at my beck and call to look out for him, and as soon as I finish this letter (to-day being Sunday) I shall order him up and go for an hour's gallop over the beautiful downs that we are in the midst of, and look out over the misty waters of the Channel that points to the open sea and on which one might sail without another sight of land, on the long course around Cape Horn and right up to the entrance of my beloved Golden Gate!

My regulation horse kit of saddle, bridle and other tackle has not yet been served out to me, so in the meantime I am very glad to have my own gear that I brought over with me.

During this month that I have been in the Artillery, I have been handling about the same number of men right along, fifty to one hundred twenty, but on many more kinds of work than

at first—Marching drill, skeleton driving drill (manœuvres with the guns and wagons), gun drill, riding, care of horses and stables, signalling, rifle drill and musketry—so you may see that I have my hands full. I suppose the best way to give you the picture will be to take a day in detail—I won't inflict it on you but once:—

- |      |       |   |
|------|-------|---|
| 5:00 | A. M. | Reveille.   |
| 6:00 | A. M. | <i>I get up.</i>  |
| 6:30 |       | I ride with a class for an hour.  |
| 8:00 |       | I breakfast.  |
| 9:00 |       | I take the morning parade for three hours and a half, during which time I leave the men split up into two or three sections, doing different work.  |
| 1:00 | P. M. | I lunch, after a couple of gin-and-bitters in the ante room.  |
| 2:00 |       | I take the afternoon parade for two and a half hours.   |
| 4:30 |       | I tea.  |
| 5:00 |       | I take an hour's gun drill.   |
| 6:30 |       | I wash and dress for dinner, get down to the mess in time for a round before dinner, and then into dinner at 7:30. This is the only ceremonious meal of the day and takes one hour and a half, usually—but I thoroughly enjoy it. |

After dinner I read, sit around and yarn, or play bridge with the

Colonel of the 109th Brigade,  
and a couple of Majors. Turn  
in somewhere between eleven  
and twelve usually.

And all this time, remember, that while I may be actually learning—nobody is supposed to know that. I am here to drill and train my men as if I knew the whole damned show. As a matter of fact, I keep in pretty close touch with the regimental sergeant-major, an old horse gunner, with about forty campaign medals, who knows how most things should be done and never forgets his place.

The thing I want to point out in all this is that I have got the joke fairly on Colonel Karmany—although I know he will be pleased as Punch that I have. He used to point out the rookies being drilled at Mare Island as we would walk out to the links of an afternoon, and tell me that *that* was what I was coming to, and that I wouldn't be in the ranks three days before I would get the Guard Room for telling some Corporal to "go to Hell"! And instead of that, I am here drilling, instead of being drilled, with the whole weight of His Majesty's Government back of me if I choose to tell all the Corporals in the Regiment to "go to Hell" seven times a week! As a matter of fact, I get along very well with the men and the N. C. O.'s, and I don't think I have an enemy in any one of them, nor do I ever get any back talk from any.

I am afraid though, my dearest folks, that I

won't have reduced my vocabulary of cuss words any when I get back—I simply couldn't get the work here done without them—but on Gookie's account I *have* cut out a few of the "great big ones."

I cannot venture a guess as to when the 24th Divisional Ammunition Column will get out. We have not yet our horses, harness, war ammunition wagons; nor have any of the brigades their guns; but once we are equipped, I think from the point we are at now, that we can get the men trained ready to take the field inside of three months. I am afraid the report of a June departure for us was too optimistic.

I hope to get away for my gunnery course now inside of a week or so. It lasts a month of very hard work and long hours (5 A. M. to 8 P. M.) and takes in all the practical gunnery of a full three years' military course.

Following that, I may have a two weeks' signalling course and after that a two weeks' course of observation at the front—this consists of observation in the trenches, from concealed posts; charge of telephonic communications and probably four or five days near a couple of guns in action. When I return from that I will be, according to the speed that I have worked during my three months of training, and according to how the standards of the present day go—a bang-up gunner, competent to take the full command of a section of two eighteen pounder Q. F. guns and fifty horses and men.

And when I am that, trust Habs to get per-

manently to the front in the quickest time and on the first job allowed!

And now I want to tell you, my dearest folks, that as each day flies over my head, I feel more and more sure that I have found the right work for myself out of all the jobs the world has to offer. I wasn't satisfied in the Infantry, but here with the horses and guns, I feel myself among the things I was born for. Artillery is to-day the most important arm of the service, and that is the one for me to be on. I would not exchange right now for either the Cavalry or the Flying Corps, nor, much as I love the sea, would I shift to the Navy—for I have found the place where I belong in the Royal Regiment of Artillery. And when I say "*the place where I belong*," I've said all there is to say.

This is all I am able to tell you of the work I am doing and my immediate prospects ahead as viewed from this day of grace, May 9th, 1915. But the present is good and the future looks better.

Just at this minute, and for the last two days, I have been shocked (there is no other word for it) over the terrible end of the *Lusitania* with her one hundred and more American lives, and I watch keenly for the news of what answer our Government will make. It will be a great shame on our country if it is passed over.

I didn't really hate the Germans when I came over here—but I am beginning to believe that all the good has gone out of them, and I know that before the long war is over, we of the allied

troops, and particularly the British, will be called upon to face more frightful and barbarous weapons than savage warfare has ever conceived of. The torture-gas of Ypres is only the beginning of it. The road to Berlin lies not across Europe, but across particular Hell!

Affectionately,

HABS.

P. S.—

On reading over this letter, I find that parts of it contain an objectionably bombastic tone. Please excuse this on grounds of over-enthusiasm.

*To Lucile.*

SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION,  
R. H. & R. F. A.,  
LARK HILL,  
SALISBURY,  
24 May, 1915.

DEAREST GOOKIE,

As you may see, I have only had to wait nineteen days from the date of my transfer to R. F. A., before I am here to begin my month's gunnery course.

I have just come down from Stow, where I have been spending three days' leave with Jack (the first since I joined) and having a most enjoyable time in "my English home."

Subalterns are arriving every minute and the course promises to be the hardest work and the *most interesting* that I have ever done. We are in the middle of Salisbury Plain, which is now



covered from end to end with encampments, I suppose comprising about a million and a half of men, and thousands of guns and aeroplanes.

Best love,

HABS.

### *A General Letter.*

SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION,  
R. H. & R. F. A.,  
LARK HILL, SALISBURY,  
29 May, 1915.

MY DEAREST FOLKS,

On the 5th of May, Paul's birthday, (his brother, Paulding) as I think I told you, my name appeared in the *Gazette* as newly commissioned in the Royal Regiment of Artillery, and on the 20th I received orders to report on last Tuesday (the 24th) to the above address for a course of gunnery on the eighteen pounder, quick-firing field gun—the gun with which we are equipped. I immediately applied for, and was granted, four days' leave in the meanwhile.

Salisbury Plain, badly named, as it contains beautiful rolling country with plenty of prominent hills, is about forty-five miles long by twenty wide. It is chalk country throughout, six inches below the surface of the ground. The turf is very good all over, but trees are (for England) few and far between.

At present, it is the great training camp of England, huge clusters of grey iron huts being scattered all over it. There are quartered here,

roughly, a million and a half of men, who all day long are carrying out training manœuvres all over the face of it—while there is usually a minimum of half a dozen aeroplanes in the sky. It is a windy country.

The School of Gunnery occupies a tiny camp on the top of Lark Hill where we have two large messes, about ten huts, four lecture huts and an encampment of tents. There are about a hundred and fifty subalterns here for the month's course—a new course of from twenty to thirty starting each week and the seniors passing out.

As I arrived on time, I share a big room in a warm hut with another man—a very decent young sea-going chap, who knows the Pacific Coast. The mess is very good, but crowded.

And now for the course—to quote the words of the Commandant in an hour's talk on the opening morning—"Gentlemen, we have just thirty days in which to take you and make soldiers of you. Most of you have been heretofore in civilian life, and in your training for service you are denied the two years' course at the Royal Military College which forms the first part of the preparation of an officer of the regular Army. (*We are Kitchener's Army*). Gentlemen, in the short time that we have you here, we intend to put you through all the training, from an artillery standpoint, that you would get in that three years' course. You will also become fully conversant with the usages of military etiquette as distinct from the ordinary good manners of a gentleman in civilian life."

Now whether all these glittering promises will be fulfilled to every man in the course, I do not know (personally I am frankly out to make a record), but I must say that our instructors have started out with the spirit calculated to succeed. For, from the opening day, I have not averaged (outside of meals and actual time asleep *not* in bed) one hour a day to myself, and this has been split up into about four different periods.

From 6:45 in the morning we are on parade until 6:45 in the evening, with two nights a week out entrenching guns. There are two breaks in the day of an hour and a half each (lunch and tea) and one in the morning of half an hour; but to date, I have not used ten minutes of any one of these, and not more than half an hour of the evening for the pursuit of vain pleasures.

No, sir—as soon as ever I get up from table, I find myself automatically steering for this desk to copy out a bunch of notes, or to the first unoccupied chair to study a piece of “section gun drill” (eight pages fine print to learn by heart) or “breech mechanism” or “right ranging with percussion shrapnel” or “coming into action on a side slope” or the use of the time fuse with high explosive lyddite shells or some other interesting subject intimately connected in one way or another with making good Germans out of live ones.

Yesterday I was ranging over the country with the rest of my course in the intricacies of battery drill (mounted without the carriages) when I came slap bang! upon the oldest ruins in England—Stonehenge, of which I have heard all my life,

This morning I have been for four hours observing the fire of a gun battery of eighteen pounders, ranging up to six thousand yards under direct control of three aeroplane observers. Rather a contrast, eh? And since it is the first time that I have, myself, heard the sound, it were as well to give you here just a word on the impression conveyed by gun fire. (Colonel Karmany, please skip!)

The actual report of the gun, although a very beautiful flash, and quite surprising the first time you hear it, at close range, pales into insignificance beside the sound of the passage of the projectile which immediately follows it. For the far-famed scream of the shell—I can assure you, has never been over-rated. It is the finest sound that mine ears have ever listened to, and gives the greatest impression of *mighty power* that you can possibly conceive. Its note is pitched in a higher key than the scale of music runs up to.

So, fondest, fondest love, and nothing else will reach you during the intervening week,

From

HABS.

*To Lucile.*

BEAUMONT COLLEGE,  
OLD WINDSOR,  
20 June, 1915.

DEAREST GOOKIE,

The gunnery course is finished and here I am up at Beaumont for a week-end with Father Tim.

My Captain instructor was kind enough to tell me that I had made a complete success of the course and I, myself, feel that I am beginning to master the gunner's job. I could probably put in another month's practice to advantage, but I do not think more, and I could go out without fear of being incapable any day now.

The Division has moved to Aldershot, where I rejoin to-morrow, and the next thing on my list is another heart to heart with my Major Potter and a transfer out of the Ammunition Column into a Battery—for I want the command of my own guns when I go out.

I am staying in town with Mrs. O'Sullivan to-night and calling on the Dickens, who are great friends of hers. (He is an old Beaumont boy.)

Last Saturday we dined with Professor and Mrs. Gayley (of the University of California) at Morley's. They have been over for a year.

The luncheon bell is ringing and I must run. Father Tim sends his best. I'm awfully glad you wrote to my Major.

Devotedly, dearest—

HABS.

*To Lucile and David.*

NEW COPSE FARM,  
SALISBURY PLAIN,  
25 July, 1915.

DEAREST GOOKIE AND DAVE,

The excitement has started. The 24th Divisional Artillery has come up for its practice

firing—600 rounds for seventy-two guns, and I was picked for the range party of three officers, thirty men and horses. Also, I have been told unofficially, that I am to have my transfer to one of the brigades after we have fired the course. The supposition is that we will go out very soon afterwards, but to which of the two fronts, nobody knows.

The Divisional Ammunition Column which I am in at present, will not go out, nor is it up for the firing. Each brigade (four batteries of four guns and eight wagons, each) has its own Brigade Ammunition Column of sixteen wagons, which supplies the ammunition to the second row of wagons (called "first line wagons") about a mile in rear of the guns in action.

Our job here (the range party) is to place all the targets and observe the firing from the various "dugouts" and "splinter-proofs"—a couple of hundred yards away, and to patrol the range. This latter is my particular job, for which I have charge of eight mounted men called "vedettes" and an N. C. O.

The range is roughly five miles long by two and a half wide, with a perimeter of about fourteen inches. Along this there are eight flagstuffs. The vedettes gallop away from here at 7:30 in the morning and each proceeds direct to the flag staff which has been allotted to him, where he hoists a red flag and patrols a mile or so in either direction throughout the day to prevent any one from entering the danger zone. I make about a half of the round each day to see that they are

on the job, and spend the remainder of the time observing from the firing batteries, or close up in the "splinter-proofs."

I have two very good fast chargers and I just about tire both of them out every day, as all my work is at a fast gallop across this glorious green rolling country.

I am in close touch with the R. A. Staff (General, Brigade Major and Staff Captain) all the time, so if I can't manage to bring myself to their attention during the two weeks we are here, sufficiently to make them realize that I am quite indispensable to the Division—it will be because they are wooden-headed entirely. As they are an awfully decent lot, I regard this as unlikely.

I got on the good side of the aged couple who inhabit this little farm house, as soon as we arrived, and persuaded the old girl to undertake our cooking. We draw our rations, buy what extra we need in the neighboring village of Tilshead, and in consequence I have got a very decent little mess running, where—with the aid of a barrel of home-brewed beer on draught—we can make our noble commander, who goes by the name of Brigadier General Sir . . . , Bart, C.B., D.S.O., quite comfortable when (?) he drops in for his little afternoon calls. (If you find my humor getting ponderous, don't hesitate to cable.)

The weather has been very wet for the last month. In Camberley it was particularly hard on the horses in the open, and on the men under canvas. My own tent was quite comfortable. Here it promises continual rain also, but we are

all in warm dry quarters. I can keep fairly dry riding in the heaviest rain in a big riding mackintosh, unless I have to dismount too often.

The trek up from Camberley was bad. We left at 2:30 P. M. in the midst of a pouring rain and did six miles to Farnborough station where we entrained. It was the first time the men had ever loaded horses and wagons and I was pretty busy for about an hour. Two horses were brought us to Amesbury where we disentrained, hooked up and started away at 7:30 to find No. 7 Camp, Hamilton Lines, the approximate position and direction of which we knew—but no more. Fortunately, it was not far from Lark Hill where I had been on my gunnery course, so I finally found it and halted the little party for the night at 9:30. Got them unloaded and outspanned for the night, watered, fed and picketed, and the men into their huts carrying their own grub—while my servant was setting up my gear in a spare hut, and finally made for the Officers' Mess myself at ten minutes to eleven, where—glory be—I found a hot dinner and something to drink awaiting me.

Next day we came on here (another six miles). I dropped behind with one wagon and team of six to draw to-day's rations for the men, and forage for the horses at the Army Service Supply Dépôt, where everything was upside down and drowned out. I finally got away from there at half past one, and out here at 3:30 to find the rest of the party settled. I enjoyed the real luxury of lunch out of my saddle bags on the way.



Half an hour later the Brigade Major showed up, and we rode on range with him for three hours more.

To-morrow the firing starts and I must get to bed.

Fondest love to each and every one of you from

HABS.

## IV

### ARRIVAL IN FRANCE

*To Lucile and David.*

FRANCE, 1st of September, 1915.

DEAREST DAVE AND GOOKIE,

The last three weeks have fled so fast and have been so full that I have been guilty of the longest lapse in writing since I left, and I hope also the longest until the "revoir."

I sent a long "general" from Mrs. O'Sullivan's about a month ago, but am afraid it may have gone down on the *Arabic*. If it did you didn't miss much—for it was entirely impersonal and contained only general information.

To take up the tale from the end of our series, immediately upon return to Drycut, I was transferred to the 107th Brigade where I was posted to the Ammunition Column. The two weeks following were all preparation for departure. I got away for three days to Newport Castle with Tommy and the Evans—the first time Tommy and I had been together in five months, and we had a bully time and talked ourselves out.

The day of my return from there I was taken out of the D. A. C. and posted to D Battery as

right section commander, where I hold sway over two guns, 4 wagons, 50 horses, and 70 men. Two days after that, we left for France where we arrived yesterday after an uneventful passage. We are now entrained and en route from "somewhere" to "somewhere else," which is all these damned regulations allow an officer of His Majesty's Army to communicate.

I expect we shall go into camp and train for several weeks more, but with ordinary luck we should move up to take our place in the firing line soon after you receive this.

I have written Tommy to cable you this information at once on account of no letter being even on the way at present.

I realise that it will be a little shock to find me really on active service; but on the other hand, I count on the first letter I am able to send you after we take our place, to have a most soothing effect; the "great unknown" which we always dread will have become the known—the everyday—the commonplace—to me.

The Colt automatic which you and Davy and Bill ordered, arrived and is admired as the best weapon in the Brigade. I love to think of you when I handle (or rather "fondle") it.

We are stopping for tea just by way of a reminder that we are *not* in the war yet—but it means I must leave this.

Au revoir—my dearest, for a few days. I am very happy, but as Gus would say—my attitude is "strictly business."

Saw Major Potter this morning, who congratu-

lated me on my promotion to the Battery. He is a dear and you must both meet him, when you come over to witness the triumphant return of our armies in 191—?

Fondest, fondest love

From

HABS.

*To Lucile.*

FRANCE, 8th of September.

DEAREST GOOKIE:

A week ago at the end of our train journey en route on which I wrote you and Davy, we went into camp about five miles away with the rest of the brigade,—officers and men in billets—guns, wagons and horses parked in a beautiful glade of Normandy poplars alongside a little river. It was one of the most ideal spots you can imagine in the sunshine—only that night it came on to rain and oh, what a difference in the morning!

It is a chalk country, and with the least rain—the horses' tramping turns the whole topsoil into a sticky mud. The horses were standing more than fetlock deep in it—and hock deep in some of the worst spots—and they stood so during another whole twenty-four hours' downpour, so that on the morning of the next day things were in a really sad state—when there came an alarm parade to get hooked up and packed and away out on the road as quickly as possible.

It took over two hours to get the whole brigade out—then we were ordered to come into action on

top of a hill about 300 feet high. It was steep, and the ground soft, wet, stubble—and with the horses all in from their two days' standing in mud and being rained on, we had a lovely time. The whole brigade rapidly got stuck in different postures all over the hillside.

I was battery leader for the day and by hooking in extra centers and leaders to make ten in a team, and putting all the gunners with drag ropes onto one carriage at a time, I managed to get three of my four guns into action just below the crest. One other battery did the same.

We did not return to the same gun park, but to another just like it, and as the weather cleared immediately afterwards, we have been most comfortably (and artistically) encamped there ever since. Most of the time has been taken up with harness cleaning, exercise, washing, a little drill, etc., but yesterday we were out for a hell of a big field day—over a division engaged.

Almost immediately now we move up for a few days' practice in some safely held part of the firing line, and shortly after we return from that we will go forward and take up our permanent part of the line.

So I shall be in action and out of it again by the time you read this. Isn't it glorious, my dearest?

Fondest love, from

HABS.

*A General Letter.*

FRANCE, 14 September, 1915.

DEAREST FOLKS,

My last letter (to Dave and Gookie) told of our proposed start for a practice in the firing line—then some further training before taking up our permanent position. This schedule has since been altered, and in consequence, I am starting this letter by the light of a candle in the quarter of an hour before our evening meal—deep down in the cellar of a partially ruined house about a hundred yards from our guns in action. Très pittoresque, eh?

The way of it was thus: Two days after I wrote last, one half of our brigade was attached to one half of the 4.5 inch howitzer brigade under their commander—and vice versa—and off we started in different directions, in column of route.

We—"D" Battery—brought up the rear of our party (with the exception of the Ammunition Column detachments). The first day we covered twenty-two miles and stopped the night in a decent little village. Officers billeted in a farm house—which we were particularly grateful for, as we had lost our wagon with all our baggage on it, detached by order of the staff Captain early in the march for overloading—so that we only had saddle bag kit (toilet articles) with us. The second day we halted at 2 P. M., and enjoyed the same comforts at another village—and the third night we reached the point where we were to

establish our permanent wagon lines—about seven miles in rear of the firing line—where (D. G.) our kits caught up with us.

The march was a little tiresome—averaging about eight hours a day on the road, watering and feeding one hundred and thirty horses and men a couple of times—not to mention an early reveille every morning, two hours “stables” (grooming, watering, feeding, etc.) and the same extending well into the evening at the end of the day’s work.

#### NEXT MORNING.

On the morning of the 12th of September we mounted all our gunners (52) most of the N. C. O.’s, and rode up to the position we were to take up. Dismounted under cover of houses half a mile in rear and marched up in small parties.

The four gun-pits which we were to occupy had been about half completed for us by another battery, so that only a couple of days’ work by our own men was needed to finish them. The Captain remained with my two brother subalterns, Humphrey and Baxter, and all of the crew, and I returned with the led horses and extra drivers to the wagon line. All afternoon I spent in setting the sights (five to each gun—a rather complicated job) and at 5:30 in the evening, with only one corporal and the Quartermaster Sergeant as outriders, I left with the firing battery (four guns and four ammunition wagons) to bring them up into action.

The traffic was heavy and the way rather round-

about, so that what with stopping to water *en route*, I just reached the halting place a little before eight o'clock, the hour at which it becomes dark enough to go forward with vehicles, free from the fears of observation by the enemy. Moved up the last half mile at 500 yard intervals between vehicles and halted the battery in rear of the pits at 8:15, where I handed it over to the others to run the guns into the pits and unload the ammunition, while I ripped into the galley and stowed away a good dinner.

Left with the four gun limbers and empty wagons at 9:30, and after getting into the back yard of another battery in action, where I had to reverse the eight six-horse-teams in thirty feet of room—and going a very long way round to avoid the frightfully heavy traffic, I pulled into the wagon lines at 1:45 in the morning, completing a nine hours' jaunt for the horses and drivers without food. Fed both at once, issued orders for reveille at 8:30 (luxury) and turned in under the stars.

Next day I spent very busily in installing the wagon lines on a permanent basis—solid, well set up, picketing lines for the horses—harness racks, properly lined in rear—wagons parked in column of route under a hedge ready to hook in and move off at a moment's notice—men's bivouacs lined along another hedge—Quartermaster's stores covered over—two kitchens for officers and men—officers' bivouac, etc., etc. All ship-shape and Bristol fashion—you know what I mean.

Late in the P. M. the D. A. C. sent me up four

DIVISIONAL  
AMMUNITION  
COLUMN



hundred rounds of ammunition which I transferred to our empty wagons and limbers, and at 5:30 I packed my saddle bags, had tea, ordered my horse and groom and rode up here to the battery to relieve Baxter—who returned on my horse.

And now a few words in regard to conditions in the firing line and the general atmosphere in which we live, now that we have taken our place. I have told you that our wagon lines are far in rear—this is the case throughout this district. From about half a mile in rear of the guns, right back for another ten through the country, is a maze of telephone wires—roads all under military control with regular traffic regulations and dispatching points—dépôts, offices and headquarters of a thousand different kinds, batteries of artillery and battalions of infantry resting—ambulance stations, travelling work shops and flying corps dépôts—and Heaven knows what else!

As far back as ten miles the sound of the guns is distinctly heard—always there are three or four aeroplanes up (mostly our own at present) one of which at least is being fired at, though I haven't seen a burst within a half a mile of one yet—and away in two curving lines many miles apart, stretches the long line of observation balloons—our own and the enemy's.

Although the whole of this district has been fought over—as shown by the miles of trenches and entanglements you come through—you do not

notice that the landscape is particularly crippled until you get up to within about half a mile of the guns, where the hostile artillery has gotten in its work—but at this point begins all the thorough desolation of war.

The village just on the enemy's side of which our guns are in action, spreads over about one hundred acres, fairly thickly dotted with houses, and of these, not a single one is untouched by shell, while most of them are knocked all to pieces.

There are a number of other batteries in action close to us here—a couple of them have been shooting over us from less than four hundred yards away for the last hour, while two very noisy aeroplanes have been circling slowly round, very low overhead, observing their fire for them. Both machines have been shot at a dozen times, but as it doesn't seem to bother *them*—I don't let it bother *me*. So much for our own side of the line, looking back.

As we look forward, the first thing in front of the guns is a very picturesque collection of about twenty French soldiers' graves, marked by little wooden crosses. The next thing is a hedge a couple of hundred yards away, which just screens us nicely from the eye of the enemy on the ground—and also blocks our own view of anything beyond. For two thousand yards more, through several lines of reserve trenches with communication trenches leading up and through them, the country is ours up to the first line of fighting trenches—and opposite them less than one hundred yards away are the enemy. As to

who owns that thin strip of one hundred yards, there seems to be some doubt and a good deal of argument. The only thing that looms up prominently over there is a steel structure of twin towers, for all the world like London Bridge (which is what the Tommies call it) which is the main German observation station.

Now for ourselves:—The guns are in action in four pits about two feet deep. The sides are built up to a height of six feet with heavy timber stanchions which support a roof of 110-lb. rails. On top of the rails and all around the sides—front and rear—leaving only sufficient aperture to take a sight to the rear, and get whatever switch angle is needed to fire through in front—are piled layers of sandbags and earth two feet deep and constantly growing thicker as we work. Then, running out of the side of each pit is a covered trench leading to the deep dugout which we attempt to make proof against the 15 P——— high explosives of the Germans—commonly known as “pip-squeaks.”

In addition there are two telephone dugouts. The telephone, by the way, is the whole show in this work—we ourselves have over fifteen lines out to the different headquarters, observing stations, forward trenches, etc. These are constantly getting cut and broken and are the trial of our lives, but we should be quite helpless without them.

The inside of the pits and dugouts is quickly becoming most complex and luxurious. In the centre is the shining green gun and carriage, tak-

ing up most of the room—stacked in recesses in the walls are round upon round of ammunition, and against the walls are the men's bedding or clothes in orderly piles. Buckets of water for laying the dust and washing, complete the equipment, but the real note of the picture is the six brave boys of the gun crew disposed in various attitudes of ease and comfort, chatting, smoking, speculating on the issues of the day or perhaps listening to the wise doctrine of some older No. 1—telling them the rules for keeping a whole skin themselves and still working the guns when the enemy's shells commence to fall.

We—the officers—are very comfortable in our cellar. One room the Captain and telephonist share—the other, the two subalterns sleep in one end of, and all mess in the other end.

(In one of the neighbouring pits established some months ago, they have running water, electric light and, as I live—a Piano! Rescued from the ruins.)

I have my comfortable bed on a thick layer of sacks in my corner and my stuff laid out on a little bench alongside with plenty of candles to dispel the gloom. Upstairs is one room for the men's tools and another for our three servants and cook, where they get us up very good meals. Nothing could be lovelier as long as things remain quiet—which they won't for long.

All the batteries in our neighborhood are firing constantly and it isn't in the nature of things that the Germans won't reply. At night they send over a good many star shells and a few Jack

Johnsons (8" H. E.) to right and left of us, but that is all so far. We, ourselves, opened fire at 1:26 yesterday and got over four guns onto the zero register of our "zone," and now we are waiting for one of the planes to finish with the battery it's observing for at present—to continue our firing and register the rest of the points in our zone under its observation and correction. Shall probably be firing all afternoon.

My routine while we are in the position we hold now will probably be a couple of days with the battery—next two observing from the trenches, then two days back with the wagon lines. These are particularly easy when the weather is fine.

I have not yet been up to the forward trenches, but shall probably take a walk up this afternoon, if we finish registering in time. Likewise, we have not yet been shelled—but I have little doubt that both of these deficiencies will be made up in time for me to get a few descriptive words re each into this letter before mailing. Otherwise, this completes my report to date.

By the way—will you please subscribe at once for the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Life* to be sent to me? I have been breaking my neck to get them through London and am constantly missing important parts of my serials! Also send along—the whole bunch of you, mind—all the cigarettes you can lay your hands on and keep on sending. Mark the packages "For distribution 'D' Battery" and they will send them along duty free. Cheapness and quantity should be your watchword

and I am going to assure you that it will be one of the greatest charities you can ever give to. The men are constantly short and think more of a cigarette than a meal any day. Also it gives *me* a very efficient means of entirely *unauthorized* punishment by stopping the gifts of any one who gets a little gay.

The Sunday papers which Gookie sends me are the greatest treat I have, so you might each bear it in mind to send anything good that you come across any time you feel like it. And last of all, will one of you send me a little can of maple syrup every once in a while? I don't want to pile all the requests on Gookie.

The chance has just come to mail this, so I am going to close it quickly and get it away. So that you won't be too awed, I must reach the anti-climax and tell you that in spite of everything, the inhabitants are farming and kids playing in the street less than half a mile away. My next letter, which I hope will follow in a few days, will probably contain a little more excitement.

So-long for the present and *write me more letters*.

Always affectionately,

HABS.

*To Lucile.*

AT THE BATTERY,  
FRANCE, 17th of Sept., 1915.

WHAT A DEAR LITTLE GOOKIE!

Was there ever a sister like her in all the world—I think not.

The picture book came last night and never in my life have I seen anything quite so perfect nor so adorably gotten up—nor have I ever received a present, even from you, that was quite so dear a surprise. I have feasted my eyes on it for hours already, and rarely will a day pass from now on that I do not go through it again, and sit beside you and walk with you and dear Davy and Georgie and the Colonel in that little Piedmont garden of my heart.

The pictures bring you almost closer than anything—certainly they are a more real assurance that all goes on as usual and that the goose hangs high at home.

It has been a great annoyance to me that I have been unable to send you regular snapshots of myself during my long training, for I realize how much more it would have brought home to you the atmosphere of my surroundings than my letters—pictures of my different camps—the barracks, the gun park, the mess, the guns, the teams going into action, and above all, the practice at Salisbury Plain. But of course it is forbidden. I could not have taken a simple snap with even a suggestion of a military atmosphere in it.

This is just a little note following the receipt of the picture book and isn't supposed to contain any news—but before I finish it I am going to tell you of a little incident following my arrival in France.

It was the morning after we bivouacked at the end of our train journey—raining heavily—that I took the horses out for an hour's trotting exercise along the road. When I had gotten about half a mile up the road, I found a cross-roads, and noticing one of the life-size crucifixes which mark so many corners in France, I made the Sign of the Cross. Half a mile farther on I found the road blocked and turned back with the party to the same cross-roads where I took the (now) right-hand turning. Half a mile up I found that road also blocked, so I again reversed, and this time went right through the cross-roads and on for another half mile or so, when looking at my watch I observed it to be time to return. As I reached the cross-roads for the fourth time and turned back the way I had first come, I looked at the crucifix again—and then it suddenly struck me that I had led the whole party of one hundred horses and fifty men through the actual delineation of the Sign of the Cross, with the arms half a mile long, and the centre marked by the crucifix itself at the crossroads—and I marvelled silently and reflected that it was a fair omen for me and for the battery here in France.

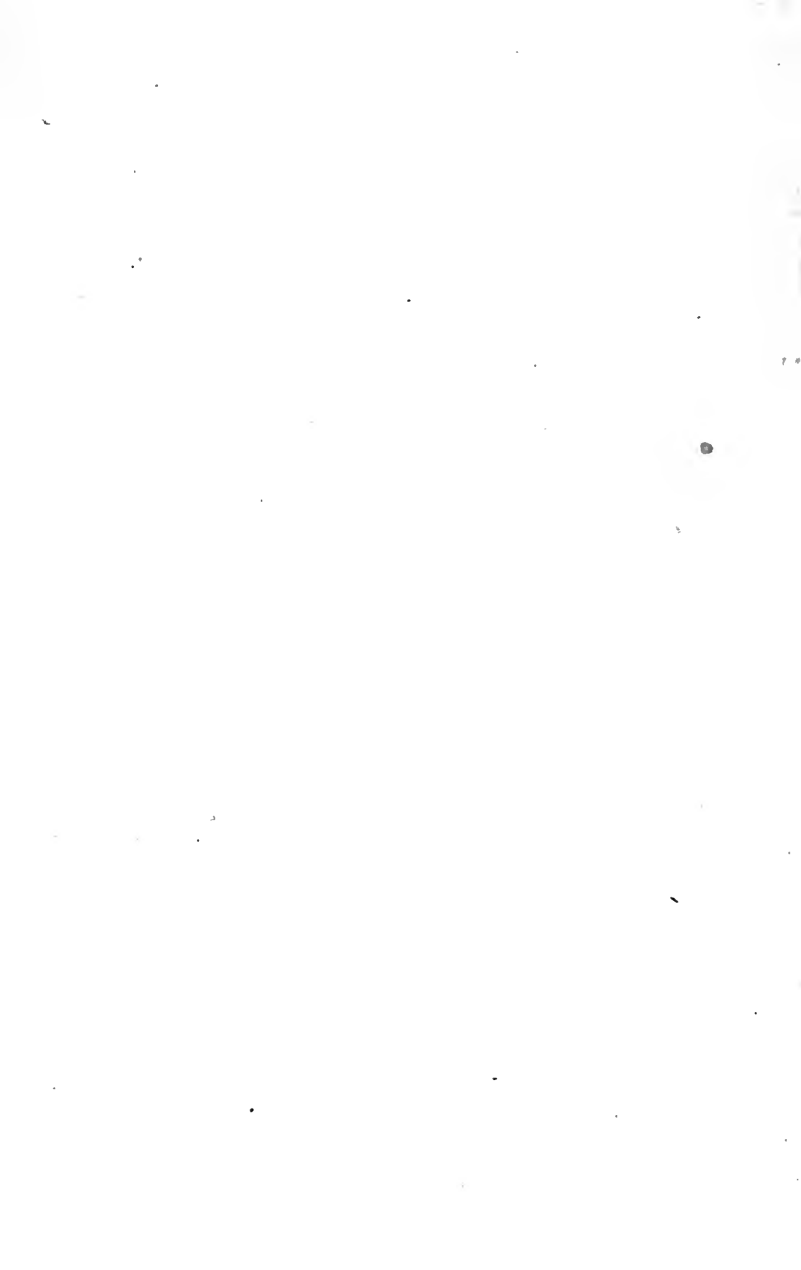
Always the same love from

HABS.





MOUNTED



## V

### BATTLE OF LOOS

*\*A General Letter.*

BELGIUM, October 5, 1915.

DEAREST FOLKS,

A couple of days after I last wrote you, we received orders of the hour of the commencement of the bombardment preceding the great attack of which you have long since had full news through the medium of the *Call*, *Chronicle*, *Examiner*, et al. I was down at the wagon lines for my three days' rest (?) and mounted after an early breakfast and rode up to the battery. There was no disguising what was in progress along the full extent of the line. Thousands of guns were busy throwing every description and calibre of shell against Germany, and their roar must have been audible fifty miles away. As I rode up I passed to a safe distance in rear and when I reached the guns the district was pretty well cleared for action. (To save time I insert here a page of notes I made in the afternoon, which covers the ground).

\* This letter was printed by his friends, quite without Harry's knowledge, in the San Francisco *Argonaut*.

## FIRST DAY UNDER FIRE

FRANCE, September 21, 1915.

"Wakened at eight in Captain's comfortable billet near wagon lines, dressed and breakfasted comfortably and left mounted with groom for battery at 9:05. Rode fast and arrived about quarter to ten to find bombardment well started. As I dismounted and turned the corner round our house to walk over to the telephone dugout to join Humphrey, I heard my first enemy shell, about a second of its whine and then the crash in front of No. 4 gun of the battery on our right, about fifty yards in front of me. I sneaked for the dugout; for a half hour from then on they came over in small lots (probably five-inch common shell) scared the next battery into their cellars and put the fear of God into the hearts of my No. 1 detachment. All day we have been firing about 1 per minute on their wire. Captain and Baxter observing from forward . . . Hump and I here. Abbot is doing Sergt. Major. The chief trouble has been our betrayal by dust. I have hounded the men to bring water for the pits, but they are slow—slow—

"At present (4:00 P. M.) about one enemy shell per two minutes is dropping 20—50 yards over us and I wish they would increase their range."

This account pretty well covers the conditions at the battery during the next four days. The Huns were shooting blind, I judge, and did not

have any ammunition to waste on sniping for us, wherefore we only had to put up with the desultory fire of thirty odd shells a day, no high explosives and only a few times shrapnel, which did no more than render my shaving place untenable and called for a little caution in going from the house to the battery.

Our observation station was about a mile in front of the guns in one of our support trenches and those connected by telephone with the battery. One of us was on post each day controlling the fire that we were throwing into the German wire entanglements, cutting lanes through it and sweeping sections of it away where we were able, to open the way for our infantry to charge through when the attack should be ordered.

Stand in my place a minute, my dearest folks, in this forward observation station of mine, look through my eyes on the work in front of you and pass your orders to the telephonist behind. Standing on a high step you lean against the sandbags in front and peering out over the top take a look over the sight in front of you.

The country is rather flat, very brown and monotonous with few objects to break the line, but right in front of you are the white lines of trenches, thin chalk parapets showing jaggedly, glaring as they stretch away across the land. The space between the two middle ones is greater than between the others and you know that the third from you is the German first line, and looking closer you see in front of this the ugly looking wire barrier, double the number of posts that our

own shows, and more and heavier wire. You know that it is about ten yards broad and as strong as German efficiency and driving can make it. And it is THIS that you have got to tear a way through with your four-inch guns that await your orders so expectantly a mile behind you. Your lines of fire are already laid out, so when your telephonist announces that he is "through" to the battery and you see that your penciller is ready to take down orders, you settle yourself as comfortably and steadily as possible and pass the order—"No. 3 gun, ranging 3500 metres, correction 12.6, report when ready." In a minute the answer comes: "No. 3, all ready to fire, sir," and you give "Fire No. 3." Another interval and then: "No. 3 fired, sir." A second more and you get the report and hear the shell go winging its way, and then—Ah! *There* she puffs and the little white bundle of cotton wool suddenly springs into being just over the German parapet and perhaps you see the splash of the bullets on the chalk. "High and to the right," you comment, and pass the order "1.30' more left; correction 132 (lengthening the fuse) repeat" and when she is ready "fire!" Again you hear the report and the hiss of the shell and this time up go your glasses to your eyes, for you know where the burst will be, and you want to observe the effect. "Puff—splash!" *There* she is again, only a couple of minutes above the line of sight or a few feet above the ground this time, but you can see it is short, so you add fifty yards to the range and wait for the next one. Three times is the charm,

and if you are lucky this little puff-ball blossoms right in the middle of the German wire. You lengthen your fuse just a little more, so that your shells will burst and graze, for that's the way to cut wire, and now that you've got it, you keep on throwing them into that spot until you can see the posts commence to thin out and the tangle get light and shaky. Perhaps you correct 8' right or left to widen your lane a little and add 12½ yards or 25 yards as you progress, and if you find that the posts are standing up too solid and that your shots are failing of effect, you shake it up with a few rounds of high explosive, just enough to give the shrapnel a hold because H. E. will only start the work, and then fails of further effect. In thirty or forty rounds, unless you are up against a particularly stubborn piece, you have cleared a lane 10-15 yards wide thro' the barrier and the white parapet shows clear and unbroken through the gap. When you get this, you probably stop a few rounds to light a cigarette or ease your position, and then shift your line of fire a little further along and start another hole.

It is queer work, this preliminary bombardment of wire cutting, for we never see so much as a head over the enemy's parapet. All the while hundreds of shells are bursting all along the line doing the same work as yourself and sometimes interfering, by reason of their dense volumes of smoke, with your own observations, but there is a satisfaction in the work and a fearful responsibility that forbids failure, because you know that when the infantry get the order to charge, they

must have a clear road to go through, else the machine guns will tear their ranks beyond any recognition, and the tragedy of a charge in the face of such fire as they always get, being caught in an entanglement that is supposed to have been cut and *isn't*, is too fearful a nightmare for a man to have on his conscience and retain his sanity.

So, when the last posts that have been standing go by the board under the latest shot, and you see that you have cut your hold cleanly, you sigh with relief, and thank God that when the time comes for our brave boys to go through flying, with their Royal Cheer, that in that spot, at any rate, no lad will be held by that stinking wire to await the steadier aim of a German rifle.

During each night of the four days, one of us stopped up with the battery, to maintain sufficient fire to preclude the enemy's repairing the openings cut during the day, and another of us stopped forward at the infantry headquarters to keep in touch with their commander in case our fire should be needed to repulse an attack.

#### TWO DAYS LATER

On the afternoon of the fourth day of bombardment, our officers met together for half an hour, while the Colonel commanding our group explained to us the last details of the morrow's attack (our part being over an hour's rapid barrage of shrapnel by all guns at a series of progressive ranges) after which we had our last



meal in the cellar, and at midnight the Captain and I started out with the three telephonists for the forward observing station.

We went overland to avoid the crush of infantry being moved up for the attack, and got separated in the darkness through my going back to hurry the others on, so that I struck off on my own hook across the fields, and after crossing a good many trenches and wire entanglements, being challenged a number of times and falling under grave suspicion as a probable German spy, I reached our F. O. S. alone and threw myself down in the long grass in front of the parapet to sleep.

After a couple of hours I was driven into one of the dugouts by the morning chill and the next thing I knew, the day had broken and I found the Captain shaking me by the shoulder and telling me that the attack was about to commence. Wide awake at once, I jumped up and shook myself, took a pull at my rum flask and lighting the day's first cigarette, climbed up into the observing position and peeled my eyes to watch one of the greatest attacks of all history.

In less than a minute the first gun sounded; in less than another the concentrated fire of half a thousand guns was bursting on the German parapet 500 yards away. How can I describe what it was like, my dearest folks? How convey to you the impression on my mind of an action so stupendous that it fails of any distinctive impression of its own at all? A solid wall of grey cloud, having birth in an infinite number of splashes of flame and rising sluggishly upwards

through the morning mists, a roar incessant as of the roof torn off of the living hell, this is all that my mind has retained of the commencement of that morning's work.

For ten minutes no sign of anything happening in the German trenches—and then, so suddenly it shocked my sight and made my heart take an extra leap, the Bosches commenced to *POUR* out of their trenches like rats being smoked out of their holes. I rubbed my eyes and stared, for they appeared to be massing in the midst of the deadly curtain and not a man to be struck down, but in another minute I distinguished a gap of several hundreds of yards in the left of the shell zone, and observed that it was into this that they were fleeing. For minutes the stream continued until there must have been 200 of them in that spot, but never a bit of fire was turned on them, the while my bewilderment increased, until it suddenly dawned on me that these men were surrendering, and that they only waited the coming of the word from our men to march in and give themselves up. For all that, this was my first sight of the enemy and I watched the continuance of the bombardment with a quickened pulse.

At the end of the first period in the program, there came a momentary lull, the first lift of our guns; then the fire was resumed, on their support trenches 600 yards farther away, and simultaneously with a great cheer our infantry were over the top and charging across for the German first line trenches. With little opposition they streamed into it and there stopped to await the sec-

ond lift, and with that second charge they were over the crest and cut off from our view; on to victory we hoped and prayed, but it will be another hour now before we can hear.

### THREE DAYS LATER

Of what took place beyond that crest, dearest folks, I can only tell you from report, for the actual assault and battle were out of my sight from the minute last recorded.

All I know definitely is that we advanced over a front of a good many miles, for a considerable distance, varying of course, but still considerable. One important town ahead of us we took almost without opposition; another held out for a long while and a third the enemy still holds. I can safely say only that we took the whole of their first line of defence—fire trenches, supports and reserves and have held it against all counter-attacks, and if you would pin me down to actual yards I can but answer for my own front, where two days later I set up my forward observing station a quarter of a mile beyond the point that I was firing on on this occasion.

“Not a great part of the way to Berlin” you may think, but then it is something to have forced back even a mile of a line which for twelve months had repulsed all efforts to shake its impregnability.

However, to get on with the battle. At the end of an hour and a quarter from the commencement of the bombardment, all artillery fire ceased

suddenly and completely; and after standing by for another couple of hours in case of need, the Captain sent me to report to our Colonel for permission to rejoin the battery, as our telephone wires were hopelessly cut by the heavy reply of the German guns.

Although a goodly number of stray rifle and machine gun bullets were singing their little song, everybody was up and out on the ground by now, and on my way across I met numbers of parties, all of whom had something to say. A reconnaissance party of cavalry dashed up hunting for the road and eagerly demanding whether the sappers had bridged the German trenches yet. They were awaiting orders—understood that we were held up in the center—wire not cut—gas too thick or something, but the right division of cavalry had broken through and were cutting them up over beyond the town of —— which we had taken at half past eight; the Black Watch had run amuck and killed everything in sight and hell was popping over the ridge.

A party of 100 dirty grey prisoners—ugly looking brutes—came in sight, being marched back by a detachment of our slightly wounded, bringing with them a smell of the stinking gas, and queer figures our boys made with their grey flannel helmets rolled on top of their heads! I thanked God I hadn't had to take mine out of its case.

When I finally got across the maze of defences to the Colonel's 20-foot-deep-telephone dugout, he readily consented to my returning to the battery,

so I returned, joined the Captain and back we started.

It was a little tricky now, wet from a day's rain, and what with wounded who were coming into the first aid station pretty fast by now, the prisoners who were being marched in, and the ambulances coming up in a long train, we kept to the fields, especially as the Huns started shelling the road with 6 in. H. F. Arrived back, there was nothing for several hours except to watch the gruesome traffic; exchange reports with anybody who passed and await orders; the while we knew the most desperate fighting was going on beyond the ridge. At six o'clock, when it was getting dusk, orders arrived for us to bring up the wagons and teams immediately, get the guns out of the pits, limber up, and stand by to advance. All we knew of the wagon line was that it was lost with a hundred others somewhere between three and six miles in the rear in some network of roads, and of course I was elected. (I always *am* on that kind of a job—I will spare you, however, the account of the job!) Suffice it to say that in just another hour I found it; in just another I was hitched up and on the road, and in the third I drew breath and halted alongside the guns. Popped down and ate and drank all I could; saw my kit aboard a limber, and then waited once more.

The night was clear and cold, with a bright moon, and with nothing but an occasional "pip-squeak" "whiz-bang" to disturb the silence, we stood by our horses for two hours more and then

orders came to advance three-quarters of a mile and go into action with the other three batteries of our brigade—slap bang in the middle of the open field, guns to be dug in as sound as possible by dawn.

“Poles up, girths tightened; battery prepare to mount,” goes the order. “Mount” and “Walk march,” and we are on our way up the road. Plenty of traffic both ways, so we must go slow, and around the corner where they are strafeing the water tower we seem to crawl, but another half hour of sneaking under only desultory fire sees us out into the open and the Captain goes forward to choose our position. In ten minutes he is back, and now one at a time through the heavy ground we run the guns and wagons up and drop into action behind an old trench. The whole brigade is stringing out on our right and in a half hour when we have handed over the teams to Humphrey, who takes them far to the rear and forms his wagon lines, it’s a case of turn to and dig until dawn, for we’ll need what poor cover we can get when the Bosches find us there in the morning.

At 4 o’clock, when the sky begins to lighten, I break the men off, as the Captain has gone forward with his signallers and wire, to try to locate a point from which he can observe. And myself, I roll into my valise for an hour’s stolen sleep. Little indeed is the rest vouchsafed to the wicked.

## NEXT DAY

I was awakened in an hour by orders from the Colonel to lay the guns onto some lively spot on the map a couple of miles away. The fog had settled down so heavily that I could not even pick an aiming point, so after working out the lines of fire on the map I called for my director (a very simple and primitive type of transit) and by the aid of Gus and Gookie's compass, I sought the direction, as so often in the past from the well beloved magnetic pole, and gave the four guns their angles.

In half an hour—wonderful to record—breakfast was cooked and I was biting into a sea biscuit covered with jam, when an orderly came tumbling over from Headquarters with "The Colonel's compliments and you are to open battery fire 15 seconds (interval) sweeping  $1^{\circ}$ , and marching 25 yards—25 per cent. high explosive until further orders."

Without laying down the biscuit or kicking over my cup of tea, I sung out "Battery—Action!" The detachments jumped to their posts, the Nos. 1 (sergeants commanding each gun) eager for the order. "Lines of fire, as laid—corrector 112 . . . etc., etc.!" and in another minute the battery is gaily blazing away, four rounds per minute, and I, keeping only a watchful eye on things, return to my breakfast.

We maintained this fire for two and a half hours. Meanwhile the mist had cleared and the sun come out bright and warm, and the skipper

had returned from forward to take command of the battery, having failed to find a point from which he could observe. And now the second day of attack was on, and the moving picture of the battle, so different from yesterday's, was cast pretty much in the form it was to maintain throughout the day, and this is the way I will give it to you, sparing you the tedium of the hourly progress.

Our own position, as I have said, was in the middle of an open expanse of many square miles, with only the low crest a mile away for cover. A mile in rear is the sizable town and the black slag heaps from the mines; on our left a large farm used as a collecting station for the wounded; while a couple of roads run obliquely forward into Germany and back to our rear.

There are probably four brigades of field artillery in action. Our own, two on our flanks and one a mile in front, which looks like a dangerous position. The whole expanse to our rear is thick with wagon lines of probably fifteen batteries and ammunition columns, half a dozen of which are constantly on the move bringing up ammunition to their guns. The two roads are thronged with troops going to the attack; prisoners and wounded returning; and in the rear, ambulances coming for the wounded.

By now the Germans are shelling us heavily, but blindly. They evidently can find little to range on except the roads, where they keep everybody pretty much on the double, but don't make as many direct hits as one might expect; and as for



our great field of guns and horses, they simply throw their six-inch high explosive quite indiscriminately over it. It is wonderful to relate that they must have put a thousand of these great packages of hate, more or less, into our midst that day, and that I did not see a horse or a man struck down. If they had used shrapnel, they must have gotten a huge bag. I believe there were a few casualties and during the afternoon one of our subalterns came limping past, grinning broadly with a piece of H. E. splinter through his leg.

Just after lunch, however, they did get the range of that unfortunate brigade that had gone into action so far in front of us, and we were treated to a sight of the poor devils being strafed out four mortal hours, by one round a minute of the same damned stuff. They stuck to their guns until three detachments were wiped out, and then withdrew to their trenches and watched the remainder disintegrate, for they couldn't get their teams up to get the guns out.

All day long the advance hung in the balance, for the Germans were pushing their counter-attack with all the vim they could muster, and many times during the day the line of supports swung back over the crest and then forward again out of our sight. The reports were all entirely unbelievable and the general tone rather discouraging; but for my part I always believe the second day brings the reaction and is not to be considered critical.

Seven times between dawn and dark did Humphrey bring up the wagons full of ammuni-

tion and I believe we fired well over a thousand rounds. We stood by frequently and fired a good deal of it at slow rate, but the greater part of it went in compliance with frantic orders from Headquarters for "Battery fire two seconds" or "gun fire" (go as you like or as fast as you can). The two forward observing officers of the day were in sight of the enemy all day, nearly captured once, and their telephonists were mending their wire under a heavy rifle fire all day long. Towards evening things commenced to quiet down, and when the sun set and we laid the guns out on the night lines, I thought that we would sup in peace; but the Bosches had only waited the annoying time to search for us with a few whizz-bangs. Didn't last long, though, and I rolled in at eight under bright stars.

#### NEXT DAY

At 4 A. M., an orderly called the skipper, who was sleeping alongside me, and I grinned and rolled over as I heard him turn out with a groan and ask what "the cast iron hurry" was, to be answered that the Colonel wished all battery commanders for a conference. After a half hour's extra sleep he returned to rout me out to listen to the plan.

It seems that Sir Godfrey Thomas had been called to another part of the line and left our Colonel commanding the Divisional Artillery. He in turn had placed our senior Major in command of the brigade, which was now split up into three

groups, owing to some of the guns being out of action with busted buffer springs, our own battery being the only one to have all four firing. It was required that the three group commanders and forward observing officers for the day should immediately go forward with their telephonists, choose their observation stations and lay their plans.

So off the five of us started at once. The light was as yet little past dawn, and the enemy had not begun to strafe, so the walk was a quiet one. We talked little as we pushed on over lines of trenches or barriers until we crossed our late fire trenches. The signs of battle were few, except for the shell-torn position held by the unlucky artillery brigade yesterday, and evacuated during the night, but here we commenced to come across the dead. In little knots they lay, struck down in every posture and with all sorts of ghastly wounds to show how they had died. Many were still warm, I know, and not all were dead.

We pushed on across the dreadful strip of what had been *no man's land* two days before, but was ours now, at the price numbered by those silent figures (and the Kaiser's receipt acknowledged by the proportion of dirty gray uniforms among them)—on to the first German fire trenches; and here the dead were rare, for most of their defenders had preferred to leave as prisoners. The loot, however, was far more plentiful and the ground was strewn with every description of rifle, bayonet and equipment. On across the line of support trenches and across the last broad gap

of several hundred yards to the reserve line, to find the gladdest and bravest sight that ever gladdened my eyes, for they were occupied by the finest body of fighting troops, I verily believe, in all the world—the whole division of Guards, 12,000 strong, the first pick of the whole British army. Not a man under five feet ten inches, magnificently disciplined and with the unbeaten traditions of five centuries behind them. They had been pushed up during the night and were now cooking their breakfast; in high spirits, clean and dry and in the very pink of fighting condition, their shining rifles with bayonets fixed bristling over the parapet. And our Divisional Artillery were to have the honor of reinforcing them!

This late German reserve trench occupied an ideal position for our first fire, for the land sloped off beyond it into a gentle hollow several metres below, and then away up on the other slope, the whole country being beautifully visible, for a mile or more, to the top of the first crest, so that we selected our observation post with speed in the most advanced salient of the Second Coldstream Guards' trenches; pointed out directions for the wire laying to our telephonists and then shoved off back to the battery, where we breakfasted and—luxury of luxuries—had a wash and a shave. Two hours later when Ludlow (the other subaltern and a splendid chap who knows his work thoroughly) and myself set out again to go up, the Huns were shelling heavily and for a part of the way it was quite tricky work.

Now, whenever you hear a "heavy" coming, the

thing to do is to drop flat in your tracks, so that if it hits at all near you, the flash of the high explosive and the splinters of shell may pass over you, for the force is always slightly upward. I soon noticed, however, that Ludlow, who had been forward in the middle of things all the day before, only dropped about once to my three times; and the occasion is therefore particularly interesting, inasmuch as I then commenced to learn in earnest the note of a shell and to recognize the danger pitch. You see, practically all of the German artillery is howitzer type throwing high angle fire, so that the whine of the shell commenced to reach you from some point close to the zenith of its parabola of flight. The larger the shell, the sooner you can hear it; and although I have never timed one (!) I believe that under ordinary conditions a six-inch gives you at least four seconds of warning;—at any rate, the time is ample for the experienced ear to judge whether it is going to pass far enough to your right or left for safety, and there is a note in the whine of any shell that is coming within thirty yards, a sort of “this means you” that is unmistakable. When you hear it you measure your length with a remarkable dexterity, and if it falls in the soft ground within twenty yards of you, you get up pretty well covered with soft dirt.

About half way forward we came to the main collecting point for the wounded that had been brought in during the night, where the early conditions of the war were almost duplicated, and there lay men whose wounds were thirty odd hours

old, and who had not tasted food or drink, nor seen shelter in that time, now waiting for the stretcher parties to carry them the impassable mile to the advanced dressing station, while the Huns swept and searched for them with two six inch high explosives per minute.

We emptied our water bottles among the worst and distributed what cigarettes we had, but as Bull Durham and paper were useless to the poor beggars, I couldn't leave them much. We cheered them a bit, and assured them the stretcher would be there soon; then pushed on to our posts and flopped into the trench and proceeded to hook up the 'phones and get in touch. We had four telephonists apiece, but we needed all of them for patrols that day, and two more each from the battery to repair the constantly cut wire. Strange to say, the day's work for us, from then on, was comparatively peaceful. The present German fire trench, their old fourth reserve line, was seven hundred yards away on the opposite slope, and entirely too much exposed to our artillery fire for them to risk much work on it in daylight; and although the heavy duels went on without cessation, and an occasional burst of whiz-bangs enfiladed our trenches, wounding half a dozen of the Guards during the day (for Germany was on three sides of us at once in this salient) we were little troubled in the trench itself. During the afternoon I registered our fire on the Bosches' trench, and at four we threw an hour's barrage of shrapnel onto the road in the hollow, in company with all the other guns in the brigade. Immediately follow-

ing this the Irish Guards on our right charged forward, to occupy a long wood masking a part of the German trenches; and as they went over the top, two of our trench mortars threw a long line of smoke bombs prettily, to screen them from the very terrible enfilade machine guns' fire on our left, which had cut to pieces one of our regiments the day before, so that they went forward in four companies, a most beautiful sight, and took the wood almost without opposition.

About this time night commenced to shut down, so that I registered the night lines for the battery at a point beyond the wood that was now in our position (the wood I mean) and then we lit a little trench fire, Ludlow and I, and cooked our supper. A couple of canned "Maconochie rations," a cup of tea and some bread and jam made a luxurious meal; and after a pipe, we rolled in together to our Pullman berth in the wall of the trench, and sending an orderly to remain at the infantry commander's dugout to call us in case of attack, we dropped peacefully asleep.

Two other things stood out in my memory from this day, and as it is the last one I am going to give in detail, I may as well throw them in. First: Two subalterns of the Coldstreams, one a very much older man than ourselves, spent a lot of time chinning during the day, and as he had travelled all over the States, our talk was mostly about them. He told me that *they* had *another* American in their 3rd Battalion of the Coldstreams. The second memory is of a thing which I had heard of

often, but now for the first time saw. Every stretcher party of wounded that set out from our own trench, or even from behind it, to get back to the dressing station, was vigorously shelled by the Germans the minute it was sighted, and invariably the bearers had to put our poor devils down and run for it, at which the fire always ceased. Germany respects no law of humanity on her battlefield—"Strafe England!" is the demand of her ——— rulers, and her poor devils of soldiers obey with a vengeance.

The next day was almost a repetition of this one. For some reason or other the time had not yet come to push the attack any farther home—the Coldstream Guards did not go out of their trench; we gave them only a few hundred rounds (the battery, that is) during the day. I returned to the battery in the afternoon and joined Baxter (my junior subaltern, just out of Eton) who came up to take my place. By the time I got back, it had started to rain; and after tea we had two hours' rapid fire in the midst of a downpour. I turned in, in the bottom of a trench, but was called in an hour to fire another hour; and this time I rolled up my bed with all the mud that had fallen in on it, and spread it on the open grass, where a waterproof sheet kept me fairly dry during the night.

Next day proved to be another repetition. At five I went forward to relieve Baxter, spent several hours chinning with my friends, the Coldstreams, then turned in alone after a bit of supper, and smoke, with my telephone line busted.



At midnight I awoke shivering, and as the night was clear, arose and warmed up by twenty minutes' shovelling on the improvement of a neighboring dugout, while the Guards were running another trench out ahead. Turned in then, and slept warm until dawn when I was awakened by the arrival of an orderly, who came to tell me that the Brigade had *retired* during the night on a general order following the receipt of the news that half our guns were out of action—by the Divisional Staff of Artillery—and that they were halting for the day somewhere a few miles in the rear! Marvelling much, I drank a hot cup of tea with my friends, and started back with my four signallers to locate them.

As I crossed the fields, the last of the dead of three days before were being buried by a large fatigue party, and I said "Good bye" to my first great battlefield, with a sigh for all the brave boys it had taken, and a cheer for the work they had done. I lost my signallers a couple of miles on by getting ahead of them in the village, so stopped alone for breakfast on the demand of a cheery voice from the 94th Brigade Headquarters, which I was overjoyed to find belonged to one of the very best chaps from my Lark Hill course—Harvey from Formosa. Afterwards I borrowed a horse from one of the other brigades of our division, and having fed my signallers again, pushed off and located the battery five miles away, just as they were sitting down to lunch.

## NEXT DAY

Of the remaining five days of strenuous fighting, I can again speak only from second hand. I know that we took a number of points needed to hook up our new line of offense, which had held out up to now, but the real attack ended about the time we left. I believe the Bosches managed to bring up sufficient reinforcements to put across a series of really strenuous counter-attacks which kept us pretty busy.

The net result to us of the show I should sum up as follows: We have found that the German line of defense is by no means impregnable, and have thrown them back over a very broad front (2-50 miles) an average distance of a mile or more. We have learned much of the difference between the attack on a point, and attack made over a broad front, and have undoubtedly discovered some flaws in this first scheme which will be eliminated in the next attempt. A simply huge number of new troops have received their christening and will be far riper and wiser when they are used again.

Of the other great simultaneous attack of the French in Champagne, it is hard to speak with certainty. We know that it was on an even grander scale than ours, and that they broke through farther; also that they have held what they took, but that is all. Personally, I am inclined to believe from many things I saw, and from my general impression of the fighting, that neither our own attack, nor theirs, was pushed home.

And that is all of the "Big Show," as we call it out here, and I dare say you will think enough. It has taken me ten hours in as many days to write this letter, and by the time you have each finished reading it I hate to think of the total labor it will have entailed; but it was my first battle and a very great one, as history records such things, and for these reasons, as well as because it will be quite impossible to attempt such a detailed account again, I have done the thing thoroughly this once; also I wished each one of you to have a little closer sight into the work that is being carried on and the conditions existent here in the firing line, than you can get from the newspapers. Henceforth I shall give you only the general accounts and personal reports.

The brigade trekked next morning at daylight. We marched easily for three days, then halted at a little village in Belgium, where for a few days we had a chance to clean harness and get our horses and gear into shape. It was here that I found Ben Woodworth (his cousin). I knew from a letter that his squad of the American Ambulance were located very close by, so the first morning that I took the horses out to exercise, I led away towards the place he had named in his letter, and had not trotted more than a mile and a half when I saw the little row of Red Cross Fords each flying a pair of tattered American flags parked in a field alongside the road, and I must say that my heart leapt at the sight. I handed over the horses to my corporal to take up the road, and turned in through the gate to enquire from a group of

half a dozen boys, "Does anybody here know Ben Woodworth?"

"Why, sure," came in deliciously "homey" accents, and then "Oh, Ben—here's your cousin."

And out from behind a corner rushed Ben, not a bit changed, and positively shrieking with pleasure. I jumped off and we proceeded to pump-handle each other vigorously for further orders with all sorts of exclamations and then fell to talking of the last time we had met—over a cracked crab and dark beer in Pop Floyd's café on California Street, until the others shut us off.

Well, it was good to meet a real relation and a pure blood American again; and when I returned for dinner with them that night, we stowed away (the whole gang I mean) a case of champagne and sang the "Star-Spangled Banner" until they closed the establishment.

Next night Ben dined with me, and we talked over old times and future prospects more soberly. He is going home for a couple of months' rest, having been out here since May, and I have hopes that he may get as far as the Coast and tell you all about our meeting. The American Ambulance appear to be doing splendid work with the French, and six of their boys have been given the Croix de Guerre for working under fire. Vive l' Amerique! (Poor Benny Woodworth was killed in France a year later.)

The day following this, the Captain and I, together with a party of signallers (same from each battery in the brigade) left on a journey of some

twelve miles to this front on the firing line, for the purpose of surveying the difference in conditions between this famous salient that we are on, and the zone of our last occupation. We arrived at the Brigade Headquarters to which we were to be attached just after dark, where we dismounted and pushed on the remaining distance to the battery on foot. The way lay through a city which furnishes the only picture of worse ruin than poor old San Francisco, I have ever seen. The shell holes, both in the city and on the road beyond, were rarely farther than twenty yards apart at any point, and on the whole—but there, I've already given you the best comparison I can—you'll finish the picture for yourselves. Yr

The battery entertained us most lavishly in their ruined château and we slept in warm dug-outs, and next day I went forward a mile through a lovely rolling country of hedges, fields and canals to the forward trenches. The station was a bad one, one of the worst posts in the line, in fact, the German trenches not more than 50 yards from our own, and when we fire, our own shell zips across less than ten feet above our heads. Don't dare to fire anything but percussion on the enemy's parapet—can't put a periscope up for half a minute without getting shot at, and if you put up more than one they spot artillery observation and bomb you; in one place we don't dare to talk above a whisper for fear of being bombed from the German listening post—less than fifteen yards away—and in a general way nobody ever lives

for more than two weeks in the salient. Nice pleasant engaging spot!

I observed a few rounds and in the afternoon we retired a few hundred yards to our rear dug-out while our heavies did a little ranging. The Huns immediately retaliated with 5.9's. H. E., which continued for two hours, killing one man and wounding four by burying them alive within two hundred yards of us. All of which is just by way of a little seasoning of local color. We returned the next day to find the Brigade moved again and had to retrace half our steps to find 'em, but late at night we made it.

We are now in a lovely little green field with a real green park, lots of water close by, and a sizable village quarter of a mile off. Well within reach of the guns, we are establishing our wagon lines here, and probably permanent winter quarters, if there is any truth in report. As soon as our four guns come back from ordnance properly clicked up, we shall probably go permanently into action on some point of the line five or six miles away. Meanwhile we are harness cleaning, drilling to beat four of a kind, sprucing things up generally. Afraid I won't be able to get to see Ben again.

And now, just a word to reassure you, my dearest folks, and to lessen, if possible, your anxiety on my account. I am now no longer untried. Two weeks' action in a great battle is to my credit, and if my faith in the wisdom of my course or my enthusiasm for the cause had been due to fail,

it would have done so during that time. But it has only become stronger.

I find myself a soldier among millions of others in the great Allied Armies, fighting for all I believe to be right and civilized and humane against a power which is evil and which threatens the existence of all the rights we prize and the freedom we enjoy, although some of you in California as yet fail to realize it. It may seem to you that for me this is all quite uncalled for, that it can only mean either the supreme sacrifice for nothing, or some of the best years of my life wasted, but I tell you that not only am I willing to give my life to this enterprise (for that is comparatively easy, except when I think of you), but that I firmly believe if I live through it to spend a useful lifetime with you, that never will I have an opportunity to gain so much honorable advancement for my own soul, or to do so much for the cause of the world's progress, as I have here daily, defending the liberty that mankind has so far gained for himself against the attack of an enemy who would deprive us of it and set the world back some centuries if he could have his way.

I think less of myself than I did, less of the heights of personal success that I aspired to climb, and more of the service that each of us must render in payment for the right to live and by virtue of which, only, can we progress.

Yes, my dearest folks, we are indeed doing the world's work over here, and I am in it to the finish. "Delenda est Germania!" is our faith. "For

God, for Liberty, for Honor," the call that so many have answered, if not all from as far as I.

Back me up, all of you, my nearest and dearest, and write to me often to show that you do.

Always and forever,

Most devotedly,

H. A. B.

*Extract from a Letter Two Weeks Later:*

I didn't know when I mailed that, that it is permitted to mention the names of places two weeks after any action named, so long as your own unit has completely moved away, but as all these qualifications are fulfilled now, I will fill in the names for you here. If the San Francisco papers give any sketches of the locality, you can work it out, or borrow the *Illustrated London News*.

The first position of our battery was on the outskirts of Vermelles, firing on the zone between Loos and Hulluch. When we moved forward into the open, we were on the right (looking toward Germany) of Le Rutoir Farm, which was the gathering point and first dressing station for the wounded. The 2nd Coldstream Guard trench, where I was forward observing for two days, ran about due north and south from Hulluch, and the point that I threw most of my fire on, was the "Wood and Chalk Pit."

I think, and am almost sure, that you will be able to locate all of these places in the *News*, and you'd better pass the information along to the



family because it will be sport for them to be able to recognise some of Hab's work in the thrilling double page illustrations of Mr. A. Ashmead-Bartlett, "our famous war correspondent."

## VI

### WINTER

#### FIELD CARDS

*To Lucile.*

October 1st, 1915.

DEAREST GOOKIE,

We have been for two weeks in the centre of the British attack, and are now retiring to rest and reform. Will write at great length in a few days.

I would be nowhere in the world but right here, dearest, it is the centre of the great fight for the freedom of all of us.

Devotedly,

HABS.

*To Gus.*

DEAR BARAB,

Your chit in the round robin from "Lonely" (a St. Helena estate) reached me where you guessed, and a little better, for I was sitting in front of one of the first line trenches when I read it, just after we had pushed the Huns back a mile, and I was "strafeing" them with a little high explosive, directing fire by telephone. You're a peach—

HABS.

*To Lucile.*

BELGIUM, October 12, 1915.

DEAREST,

Your letter from Fresno, the first to come direct to the Expeditionary Force address—arrived this morning, and great was my joy thereat.

We are still resting (?) a few miles in rear of the firing line and expect to establish permanent winter quarters for the wagon lines here but cannot tell yet for certain. Will probably go into action again in a week or so—permanently.

It is funny in how very close touch with you I always feel myself to be when I am away as now—and very much more so, of course, since starting on active service. I open and read your letters with a feeling that they are fresh from your pen a few hours before—and I answer with the idea in the back of my head that you will be reading it as soon as you have time to sit down a minute.

I spend some minutes of each day in the dear living room—usually in the evening about dinner time (with you) but quite often in the morning, so as to see Davy drop in. And very often I have a row with Gus about the cocktails. And when I am sitting in a totally inadequate dugout under heavy shell fire, the only view point from which it ever occurs to me to study the possibility of a “direct hit,” is—whether I will see Mama and Papa or you and Davy first.

Laugh with me, my dearest, with the little

chuckle that nobody else ever had, and be glad that the dear God has pointed me my way so clearly and made it so easy to follow. And be sure too, that I have got—at least in sober moments—that humility of which you speak. I am not losing my ambition, but I am setting much less store by it. I have never deceived myself, nor have I led any one else to believe that my success from the day I applied for my commission to the present minute, when I *howl* with joy to find myself a full-fledged section commander with a record of two weeks' action—has been anything else than the result of the great good luck that was my birth gift—and of your dear prayers. For although strangers and friends alike are kind and generous and go out of their way to help me, barring my natural tremendous enthusiasm and a certain American adaptability for any new kind of a job that's interesting—I do not recognize in myself any sort of genius or any of the other super-qualities that some of the family are inclined to tell me I possess.

I am inclined to think that of all the jobs I may hold down in the course of a long lifetime—this present rôle of a soldier in the greatest war of all time, fighting for all the things that I believe to be good and honorable and civilised, against a power which I now *know* to be evil, is the one to which I can give my best—as a brother of yours should, dearest.

Good night—only,

From

HABS.

*To Lucile.*

23rd of October, 1915.

DEAREST,

Your letter from the Lake (Huntington Lake, Fresno) came two days ago, and your remarks about the Lady Moon struck very close to my own. It was dated October 1st, and it was the night before that you had your chin with her; and figuring back, I find that from four o'clock onwards on the morning of the first—which corresponded to eight on into the night of September 30th with you, I was very busy getting the battery up, breakfasted and hooked-in by the old lady's light—preparatory to trekking off as per my last "general" letter.

I also thought of you—and though I didn't know where you were, I had the idea that if the weather were at all good you must be casting an occasional glance up at the dear old sentimental orb. So we saw her together, dearest, and our thoughts were surely twin.

I'm glad you've hit on the trick—it is a thing I have been in the habit of doing all my life when away; and many is the night—at Beaumont, in Paris, Rome or off Cape Horn, that I have made love to her and made her look over the edge of the world and tell me what was going on in Chico, in Piedmont or Bolinas. And now we will do it together.

One sentence in your letter horrifies me beyond words—the fear that I may not have time to read your very long letters. Words fail me when I at-

tempt to frame a sufficiently emphatic denial—my expression as I re-read it would have been a free pass into a home for “indignant old ladies.” Don’t you dare send me short letters—you string ’em out over as many pages as you can, dearest, without tiring the dear little fingers, and then pad ’em out with all the clippings, cartoons and magazine stories you can lay your hand on. So keep up the pace, dearest, and make the others write too.

My medal keeps me safe—it is a piece of you, my real guardian angel. I have taken it off of the pin and bound it on to Amy Long’s identification disc around my neck.

Give Carey a kiss for me next time she comes. What a true hearted old darling she is! Regards also to “Jim” (the gardener) and a friendly squeeze to “Joe” (the Chinese cook).

Devotedly,

HABS.

*To E. C. O’S.*

BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE,  
2nd November, 1915.

DEAREST STEPMOTHER,

You surely are a “Peach” to come through with such a parcel as arrived to-day! Figs and chocolate I have feasted on all day, and this evening for dinner—“*Beanos*”!—I could hear the Star Spangled Banner playing when the dish was brought in; the *café au lait* I am going to sample in the early mornings, by the aid of “Tommy’s”

cooker, and the pudding will crown next Sunday's dinner.

We are still sitting in reserve, that is to say—sometimes sitting. The rains have set in and that marvel of nature, known as spontaneous generation of mud, has taken place in large quantities. We are building concrete horse standings and huts for the men as quickly as the material is given (or we can steal it) but meanwhile things are bad.

Not much "Strafeing" lately, in fact the last few weeks have been almost monotonous. *However:*

Every day that passes,  
Filling out the year,  
Leaves the wicked Kaiser,  
Harder up for beer.

—as the Belgian Mother Goose Rhyme goes.

Best love to the "Kids." I'm for the hay.

Bon Soir,

HENRI.

*To Lucile.*

7th of November, 1915.

DEAREST,

I know I've let a long while go by, but it has been raining to beat four of a kind and I've been busy as a bird dog trying to keep up construction on my horse standings and not let 'em get swamped.

The maple syrup and sugar came four days ago and I have been gorging ever since—it was perfectly luscious.

You know by now, of course, that you identified Loos Towers quite correctly from my letter. Our position was in front of Vermelles and later to the right of "le Rutoir farm." The "Chalk Pit" and "Wood" of which I spoke are now already famous by the same names.

"The Tide" was surely a treat! I wouldn't have missed it for a thousand dollars. (This was a story in which the Placerville hold-up for speeding was employed.) Of course Stewart Edward White missed my meaning in the original incident and also in the copy, but I was glad he was so generous as to make me out a decent sort of a chap after all. If you ever see him, you can tell him that I said "Thank you" mentally and called the score square when I read it.

The *Saturday Evening Post* and *Life* are already taking second place to your letters as the greatest joy of my life here. I wonder if you can conceive what they mean to me. Try.

We go into action to-morrow again, thank God, and I've got to work out our zones of fire now, as the Captain's away, so "so-long," dearest, for a few days.

Devotedly,

HABS.



*To Lucile.*

FORWARD OBSERVING STATION,  
FIRE TRENCH,  
9th of November, 1915.

DEAREST,

Your long and scrumptious letter of the 26th of October was brought up to me this morning with my rations and I have enjoyed it five distinct times during the day, within eighty yards of the terrible Huns, who would gnash their teeth with rage and strafe my trench for half an hour, if they had an inkling that one of the hated Anglo-Saxons had the "nerve" to be so full of glee within range of their frightfulnesses. Excuse me while I draw breath for the next sentence——

Three days ago we got orders to relieve another battery that was in action about six miles from our wagon lines, so after the Captain and Humphrey had gone up and reconnoitred the position, I brought the right section (my two guns) up the same night and took over their gun pits. The next night Baxter brought up his section and my Captain assumed command.

It is a very pretty place we are in—broad wooded grounds of a big château—with a couple of other batteries nearby. The château itself was, of course, knocked into a ruin long ago, but the lovely grounds remain and afford good cover—also a hard paved road leads up to the door—a great asset in winter when we have to bring up our ammunition from the wagon lines six miles off—for the whole district has already—with only the start of the winter rains—turned to mud.

The gun emplacements were, of course, ready made for us—although there is lots of room for improvement, and as this is a very old position, the dugouts, sleeping quarters and mess are quite decent, though a bit leaky and also in need of repair.

Same place, 2 days later.

Sorry I had to leave it so long, dearest, but my relief officer came along at that minute and I had to show him 300 yards of trench with the different observation posts, telephone lines, targets within the German lines, etc., and by the time I had finished, it was dark and time to return to the battery.

I mess, when forward here, with one of the companies of the Royal Fusiliers in a snug dugout in the fire trench. The company commander, Captain Goodliffe, is a great pal of Sydney Cloman's and has also met Uncle Charlie—one of the old South African crowd—and a fine fellow. I make the fifth at table (and occasionally at poker) and we have an uproarious time. Also he has a perfectly lovely hole about thirty feet deep that we drop into when a big strafe commences.

We have had three days of rain with all the roofs leaking and floors flooded. The trenches are holding well, however, and to-day is glorious.

Two things I neglected to answer out of your letter before last—1st, the story of Kaiser Bill and Albert the Brave at the gate of Heaven was delightful. The Kaiser's answer is more or less

obvious, but the dénouement of the unfolding cross as Albert's portion is great.

It is his birthday to-day, by the way, so this morning we strafed hell out of the Bosch for a few minutes just by way of a reminder that the interest on his note to Belgium is due—and that the day when we must collect the principal in full draws ever nearer.

Second point I forgot to answer—damn it, I can't remember it now either.

I was surely tickled to death that the pictures came and were satisfactory. The horse, "Dick," is a black beggar, with an exact duplicate in disposition of "Little Billee" that we gave to the Madames.

He puts back his ears at me whenever I come near him, kicks me (gently) whenever he has the chance, and then laughs at me. Then, when I bang him over the head for it, becomes frightfully humble and apologetic. In other words, he's an awful liar, a horrible bluff, but a very great dear.

In the second picture, I told him to "look up for Gookie" as I'd taught him, and you can see he obeyed orders very nicely.

He had an awfully bad name in the Divisional Ammunition Column, where no one wanted him, so that I originally took him to save another chap who didn't want to ride him at Salisbury Plain. I found him a thoroughbred (Kentucky) whose disposition had been spoiled by bad handling, and set about to coax him out of his grouch—and succeeded so well that I carried him along with me

through my two transfers and made him my first charger.

About the Christmas Box. Send anything you like, dearest, and don't try to make it too large.

The cigarettes have failed to show up, but tobacco is always terribly slow in coming, so I've no doubt time will produce it.

No time for more now, dearest. I've simply got to get off an answer to Thomas' last because the crazy Chinaman worries when he has to wait more than ten days.

Fondest love,

HABS.

(Tom, Tommy, or Thomas, always means Mr. Thomas Evans; "crazy Chinaman" a term of endearment.)

26th November, 1915.

DEAR STEPMOTHER,

The gorgeous package arrived to-day, also your postcard. Thank Heavens my letter of two days ago will be an alibi against the charge that I only write in reply to parcels. Did you make the hot cakes? Had two Canadians to lunch and we polished off the whole lot—hot, with butter, and luxury of luxuries—hot maple syrup. The corn formed the first vegetable course and was positively lovely; I've just thought that if you can get Campbell's tomato soup it would be nice—but nothing could top the corn. I'm saving the Huntley & Palmer biscuits for the road, but am chewing a raisin right now.

Will you give my best to Mr. Garvin and tell him that the *Observer* has rolled up for the last two Sundays in good style—I am writing to thank him.

We are on our way to “rest” billets, as per last letter, and marched last night from six p. m. to five this morning—perfectly glorious moon; I bought a bottle of “fizz” on the way and enjoyed the thing. “Leave” will be soon, I imagine.

Best love from

HARRY.

*To Lucile.*

2nd of December, 1915.

DEAREST,

I returned to the battery in action a couple of days after I last wrote, taking with me a young Canadian—the most Yankee specimen in the British Army—whom I had great delight in showing round the forward trenches for the next four days. As he was a most curious young devil—insisted on seeing everything—and would poke his large and brilliant periscope up over the parapet right alongside of mine every time I did any shooting—he drew quite a number of rounds of German high explosive onto my innocent head and secured his christening in fine style. Aside from that, his coming has been like a breath of heaven to me.

On the 25th we moved out, and in the next three days proceeded sixty miles to the rear, where we are now resting—the whole Division—for about a month or until we’re needed again.

In to-night's orders I find myself posted to "C" Battery from "D." My new Battery commander is a Canadian, about thirty years old and I believe a good man. Will tell you later. The sooner we get back in action again, the better I'll be pleased.

Night, night, dearest,

HABS.

To E. C. O'S.

4th December, 1915.

DEAR STEPMOTHER,

I expect my leave will come early in January (D. V.) but will be back in action for Christmas with any luck at all.

I've been transferred to another battery in the same brigade—it's even better here—and will tell you all about it before long.

Will you please, please, *please* go to \* \* \*'s and strafe the brutes from H—l to breakfast? They'll dig up reams of correspondence for you in their office which I've sent them in a vain effort to get them to send me my tobacco regularly—which they consistently fail to do—One pound of Blackwell's "Bull Durham" and one-half pound of "Dill's Best Granulated" are what I want sent me on the 25th of each month (November still to come) and I don't care a tinker's d—m whether I have to pay duty or not, I want my smokes and I want 'em quick and regular and I want 'em bad. *Dear* stepmother, won't you *please* fix it up for

me—I can't write any more to those *brutes*—words fail.

Fondest love to the kids,  
Most affectionately,  
HARRY.

*To Lucile. For Davy too.*

IN REST BILLETS,  
6th of December, 1915.

DEAREST,

I'm awfully tickled to hear about the Christmas boxes and as near as I can tell they will arrive just at the right time—because (D. V.) we'll leave our rest billets about the 19th or 20th, and be back settled in action again in some part of the line by Christmas day—which is just where I want to be, and I'll drink your health from the front line where it will do the most good, dearest.

I was quite sure you'd try to send me more money sooner or later, but the truth is, dearest, that I decided some time ago to live *within* my pay. It was a new idea for me—I've never seriously considered it before—always having had more or less to spend and taking great joy in the spending of it; besides detesting anything in the nature of small economies.

But after coming over to England and blowing in what I had on hand in a week or two, and then all of the £100 Davy and you sent me, I just decided it was about time to drop it. So drop it I did.

I came out a little bit short as to kit and with

an overdraft at Cox & Co.'s (Army pay agents) of thirty days to work off—but this debt had piled up before I put on the brakes. Since then I've made up the deficiencies in kit, lived well for three months and this month's statement shows me £17 on the right side of the page. Of course it's easy to save on active service, and I can provide all my wants, and out of my twenty odd pounds a month, pay and allowances, save ten or close to it against a passage from Liverpool to San Francisco Bay via the Panama Canal—which (always, D. V.) will one day roll around as an immediate necessity, however distant it may appear at present.

So, it is essential that I learn this age old game of economy right away and become proficient in it during the duration of the war.

So much for that, dear, and you'll realize from it that I am well off and not in need of funds ever any more—bar accidents. Also you'll read it to Davy, who will grin and say, "I told you so"—and you can answer him, "Well, so did I!"

The last paragraph reminds me that it is the first time I've spoken to you of going into the service of our own dear country for good, if I return with the necessary complement of legs and arms to be acceptable to the War Department. The first time I've spoken of it, I say, but I've no doubt you've had it in mind for as long as I have, as the natural outcome of all this. And now that the matter has drifted into this letter, I'll give it a page or two and you remember to answer me at decent length just how you feel about it.



You see, dearest, the thing is that I feel that I'm going to make a pretty good soldier—I don't know whether my letters have given a truthful idea of what my work here means to me—not the first enthusiasm of my commission and the novelty of the long training—but the real work of active service.

I don't mean the actual killing and destruction—in artillery work it is the great exception to fire at a live target, and one which I haven't dealt with at all, in sight, as yet—I mean the other 90 per cent of soldiering. I can only tell you most earnestly that it means more to me than anything I've had, or looked forward to, before.

You knew when I left that I was due for a change in my ideas—well, it isn't complete yet, but the situation is developing, as the military writers say. I've already spoken of some of these things, particularly concerning my ideas in regard to incomes and money in general. I have rid myself of the idea that wealth—or the luxuries and pleasures that wealth gives—can give me any happiness. They can't. On the other hand, I don't idealise the grind of unceasing work. I believe that the *bon Dieu* means a man to have just as much leisure and happiness as is good for him, but he must earn the right to it, and it seems to me that the man who most nearly keeps his appreciation of the good things constantly keen, is he who stands in a position on guard, as it were, on one of the Lord's good works—his Church or his Country for example—where the knowledge that he will one day—may any day—be called to drop them all

and lay his life on the knees of his God, as he takes the field against the enemy who would destroy it—keeps his courage fast, and his heart humble.

One is inclined to say that a soldier's life in time of peace is a nice, lazy, gentlemanly sort of existence—that doesn't hold much ambition or real purpose and to a certain extent I suppose the indictment is justified. But we know that the world has by no means arrived at a practice of the Golden Rule—that hatred, ambition and greed rumble deep in the hearts of other powers than Germany (I speak particularly of the Far East) and one day this fair United States of ours, where the whiteness of our skins and all that goes with it, no less than the fat acres and golden hills that are our possessions, all offer a fair target for the ambitions of a people that love us not too well—will have to face the Pentecost of Calamity (as Owen Wister puts it) and defend herself against a powerful enemy.

She will not be prepared—no nation ever is, except the one that plans aggression—and for her failure to take the stand she owes civilisation to-day, she will have to stand alone. And in that hour she will need her army and navy and "need 'em bad"—to throw themselves into the breach and pay the price, as the original Expeditionary Force did in the retreat from Mons. A couple of thousand lives a day for the first month or two or three that she takes to collect her reserves and start the training of the great citizen army that must win back the lost ground and drive off the invader.

And if it's on the cards that I'm still to have my life ahead of me, after the present struggle, I want to be there when it happens.

I feel I will bring full value to my country at the start—the experience of a year or more's active service in this, the great war, will count for much, where but a bare handful of our own officers have been sent to watch it, and Uncle Sam will need it.

Your tale of Sister Carmelita was quite wonderful—I remember her well and you must give her my love when you see her. I've not the slightest doubt that she stood by me at a bad time, which Mother would certainly have known all about—for it was the middle of the battle of Loos, where I was under fairly constant and heavy fire for about eight days.

And this must be all for to-night, dearest. It's very late and I'm orderly officer to-morrow, bright and early, though later I'm riding into town to do a day's shopping.

The reason of this particular letter, as you'll see at the top, is to greet you on Christmas morning, as yours will greet me—and then it's all for Davy too, and you'll read it together.

Make it a merry one, my dearest hearts, I will be happy too, and you must have only joy and thanks for the blessed fact that I am where I am.

Fondest, fondest love, from your devoted

HABS.

IN REST BILLETS,  
15 December, 1915.

DEAREST,

From my last letter your fears re my clothing will already be lulled. I don't mean fears, really—perhaps I'd better say your query answered. In spite of the economy that I'm practising, I have not skimmed my kit. None of your "cheap John" stuff for Habs—3 suits of Dr. Jaegers' three star, 20-years-in-the-wood underwear form the first covering of my nakedness (one suit at a time, of course) and as for washing—the indigenous "blanchisseuse" does the trick when we're out of action, and the mending as well—and when we're in the line, my servant takes unto himself the duties of washerwoman at least one day in the week. As for the last item in your query, soap—if you will have the truth, dearest, I must confess to a cake of "Azurea" at least once a fortnight. The greatest soldiers have had their little failings, and in my scheme of cheap living, this is the exception that makes it humanly possible of attainment.

The Captain has gone on leave for eight days in England. Did I tell you mine may not come until February, owing to the order being switched to seniority of commission instead of time in action. I should worry! My new battery is very nearly the smartest battery in the Division—certainly the smartest in the brigade.

It looks now as though we might not go back into action until after Christmas. A disappointment if it's so—but not anything to cry about.

Fondest, dearest love,                    HABS.

*To Lucile.*

F. O. O. DUGOUT,  
INFANTRY BATTALION HDQTRS.,  
4th of January, 1916.

DEAREST,

Christmas day was absolutely the most prosaically miserable that I can imagine. It simply failed to be anything at all. We were still in rest camp and did not know when we'd leave.

In the afternoon I got orders to leave at 4.30 A. M. the next morning with an advance party to take over wagon lines. This order was cancelled at one A. M.

There's nothing to tell you about the day—it was simply not Christmas, that's all. Neither Christmas nor New Year happened for me at all this season, and I am glad that the time when they usually do happen has rolled over my head, and that we are all bursting into 1916. More than all am I glad to be back in the firing line on the job—where I can again get on with my work and increase my efficiency as an artillery officer—also where there is something to write about.

It isn't that I didn't enjoy the time in the rest area, for I did—thoroughly. I lazed around, took long rides, ate a lot, slept more—enjoyed the piano and the mess and had a bully time for a month, and then in the course of about a day, the whole thing got on my nerves, and I was fed up to the teeth with it. (I've got a hunch that by the time I get to the end of this letter, I'll be in a simply glorious humor, but I haven't worked off all the grievances yet—so be patient.)

I must break the thing with one spot of sunlight though—I said there was no Christmas Day for me, and there wasn't, but there *was* a Christmas Eve and I went to a darling little village church in Acquin to one of the prettiest midnight masses I ever remember. It was pretty nigh perfect, and I said it all for you and Davy, although I mentioned a couple of others just for a minute. I knew you were thinking of me the whole time, and after "Noel" was sung, I walked home under the dear old moon, that was rising (quite unobtrusively in the afternoon) over Piedmont.

None of your Christmas boxes have come, dearest—now don't feel bad. I wouldn't have had them arrive for that imitation twenty-fifth of December for anything.

We are comfortably settled here in action now for a month or two, and this is where I am really looking forward to getting 'em. Stepmother is looking them up and although I am not at all impatient about them, I *am* looking forward to the sport of going over those three carloads of loving remembrances with all sorts of pleasure.

How I love you, dearest—that heart of gold of yours is the centre of the magic circle of the friends of my life—how I thank the Lord for it—and for the ones that are grouped about it. Davy, Erny, Carey, Thomas—those aren't all, but they are among the dearest. And how the others are shown up alongside them. The surroundings under which I have now been living for some time are not such as to encourage the keeping up of any illusions. One thinks a good



*To Lucile.*

7th of January, 1916.

DEAREST,

I've just been re-reading your last darling letter and writing numerous comments on the back of the different pages before sending it on (carefully censored) to Thomas. That new Igloo makes me positively howl with joy, and on the back of the plan I've sworn Thomas to a suicide pact—that if I get killed, he swallows prussic acid *at once* and follows me to the Golden Portals, where we will make formal application to Father Peter immediately for regular week end "Ghost leave," so that we may run down and inspect it. The first visit will probably be given over to "criticising it," but any Saturday night after that, when you may happen to be sleeping there, if you should be disturbed by noisy discussions of the "holy martyrs" and awakening, catch a strong whiff of "Spirits of Anderson County," you will not be afraid, because you will know it is only one of our regular visits.—And speaking of the "holy martyrs"—you can invite Father George (Fr. Lacombe) over for the next return, to get some valuable hints which we ought, by then, to be able to give him at first hand.

You see, dear—I made the Igloo and now *you've* added to it, and I simply can't put up with the idea of not having a look at the new arrangement.

I'm doing a little looting here on your account, and when I go on leave I'll try to send you some



of the stuff—one or two pieces of brass—a fuse maybe, and such like junk.

Herewith a medal I picked up, which I think will please you immensely. I can't bless it, but I have kissed it—for you.

Fondest love, dearest,

HABS.

P. S. The medal, you will see, is Notre Dame de Lourdes. Mother always *did* consider water of Lourdes her one best bet—and I know *your* devotion to the One who showed Herself to Bernadette will make you love it.

*To Lucile.*

20th of January, 1916.

DEAREST GOOKIE,

The last two weeks have been a busy time—so busy that but for a few post cards and a bundle of forwardings to Tom, I haven't written a line.

The trouble was that when we came into action here, we took over about the rottenest wagon lines and battery position in the salient—which is going some. The latter—under the able and strenuous command of the Sergeant Major, have been pretty well cleaned up and redecorated—that is to say, where we found only a complete and abominable sea of mud, there have now arisen (permanently) various solid comparatively dry islands for the horse standings, harness rooms, huts, etc., all connected by sturdy little isthmuses so that the place is quite livable *and* workable.

But alas for the guns! For on the Sunday after we came in, the wind showing signs of shifting into the dangerous quarter for gas, we were compelled to do some shooting on the front line—having discovered that our predecessors had handed us over a false register which was far too long. It was a fine clear day, and the enemy's damned old sausage balloon was up in plain view, but we had to risk it. Of course, we were spotted.

Spotted dead—and just as we were finishing luncheon, the first of the six-inch stuff began to arrive. I walked out to the corner of the street (the mess is about 150 yards from the guns) and they surely were piling 'em in.

There being no case of violent necessity, we called the men on duty out of the central dugout—one at a time on the run—until they were all clear and no casualties and retired to watch the show from a safe distance. In about a minute there was a direct hit on No. 4 gun emplacement and after a few more rounds the old Bosch "ceased firing"—he had us registered!

The situation was now roughly this: as long as we remained in action in that spot we would have to put up with a desultory shelling of anything up to a dozen rounds daily—with the added knowledge that any time he pleased the old Bosch could turn his battery loose and wipe the whole place out. And to make it even more objectionable, it was a mortal cinch that the wily old bird would not play the card until he caught us in the middle of the next strafe defence—when we would have to stick to the guns and fire 'em until the

whole battery was knocked out. Can you beat it?

The obvious answer is on your tongue—move! And just what we had to do, but it isn't nearly so simple as it sounds. A battery position in this semi-siege warfare is nothing more nor less than a small collection of young forts. Four for the guns and the central control and telephone dugout is the least you can do with, and as each one is a sizeable affair—say 12 x 15 inside and about 30 x 30 when it's all sloped off on the outside—walls varying from two to eight feet in thickness and according to the latest order, 2 stories high so as to stand shell burst—there is several days' hard labor concerned in the construction. Take into consideration the facts that unless the weather is very thick, all the work has to be done at night and then signs of it completely disguised from above before each dawn—that you only have about a fifth of your men to work with, the others being on duty or at the wagon lines, and that the whole time you have got to keep your guns in action, and a crew on them day and night—and the job commences to look too big for anybody but a German to tackle!—As a matter of fact, it's like everything else—it only necessitates tackling it in the right spirit and carrying it through quickly—but it's a damned nuisance all the same.

The first thing to be done was to locate a new position, preferably among ruins, where you can work best without being seen and make your structures blend well from above—but principally where all sides would be screened from any ground level or balloon observation. You can never be

screened from aeroplane observation, of course; you simply have to be careful about not firing when they're up and take your chance, but it's a great thing to be screened from the rest.

The General, who knows this part of the line well, was very pessimistic about finding any likely place, for they are all pretty well staked out and occupied, but I had the luck to locate the *absolutely ideal thing* within 200 yards of our door. This was quite satisfactory and getting the material up the next night, we set to and in three days had things sufficiently well along to move the guns over. But in the meanwhile it was rotten to keep them in action in the old place. They shelled us regularly in small lots—all the time. Just enough to make it always unsafe to go to or from the battery or to remain in it, and it was with a damn good will and high spirits that we finally sneaked our guns out one midnight and ran them into their new homes. The Lady Moon was our friend the whole time, and continues to be—she is full right now and a glorious golden as she rose—and in a minute I'm going out to smoke a pipe and give her a message for the Igloo.

Well, after we got over, we had to re-register all our lines, of course, and then too we've been building ever since and improving, and now we've got to build up that second story effect to please the General, which will take a week at least to finish properly, and after that I reckon he'll probably want an elevator put in!

The trenches we are shooting over here are, on the whole, very bad. Not that they aren't kept

up in good enough shape and all that, but they have been so incontinently strafed so many times, and the dead of a year ago are planted so thick, that the aspect is somewhat appalling. They are the perfect example of the desolation of WAR to a fertile countryside, and as a look at them would make you sad, I won't go on talking about them. We only go F. O. O. (Forward Observing Officer) two days out of twelve here though, so it's not so bad. As a matter of fact, I have a devil of a good time when I'm forward. There is a tunnelling company of engineers mining under them (hundreds of yards of galleries) and the whole bunch are Colonials. The O. C. is my particular pal—a Canadian—who has mined in all the world before the War, and as I always mess with them, I ran a private wire down to their suite, twenty feet underground, and after the day's shooting or whatever's on, is over, I take my 'phone down there, send my signallers back to Battalion Headquarters, and spend the rest of the evening till about midnight, yarning or playing cards, or listening to Alma Gluck sing "Carry Me Back to Ole' Virginy."

Your anxiously awaited New Year's package arrived two days ago, dearest, and it certainly was a joy of joys. I laughed till I cried over Inez' bed warmers which I thought at first were fireworks, but which I am going to try the first cold day. The diary is a dear—the notes in back give me the chance to do the right thing to everybody who chipped in on the Christmas boxes, and the little foreword by Gookie was sweet—I'll not

forget, dearest,—don't worry, I say 'em for you, always.

And the second installment of the picture book, dear, it is just the most precious thing in the world. The pieces of home that I love best slapped right into my pocket where I can draw on them any time I like. You are darling as always—the pictures of Davy are the greatest reassurance, as you said they'd be—and the scenes wrap themselves around my heart until I breathe the glorious salt air off the Bay again and bathe myself in the Piedmont sunshine and hear the little sparrows in the Pittisporium hedge as plainly as if I stood in front of the Igloo in all my physical entirety.

I will treasure that picture book all my life.

The last page being strung out principally to carry it past the thirteen mark, I will call this a go, dearest.

Fondest, dearest love,

from

HABS.

### *A General Letter.*

BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE,  
20th of January, 1916.

DEAREST FOLKS,

I reckon you are beginning to think that it's a long time between drinks, in the matter of these "generals" of mine, but the trouble lies in the fact that since my last (Loos) letter, there has been no particular incident round which I could center one. Now, however, I feel that I should have anticipated this and sent along an occasional

shorter one just to keep you posted. But it's difficult to be faithful in these matters, and I'm not going to make any rash promises for the future which I may fail to keep. You know without any verbal assurance, that I love you enough to *want* to keep you posted—and that I write whenever my conscience hollers loud enough.

In this letter I shall give you a short resumé of our movements since the Division moved into the line in Belgium in October—and some description of the everyday life of trench warfare.

My Loos letter left us sitting in our wagon lines about five miles in rear of the firing line in a very pretty part of Belgium, and there we remained (our brigade) for a solid month (while the three other brigades were in action) building horse standings—shelters for the men, etc., etc., and generally fixing up the place as a permanent location. Early in November the word came that "D" Battery would go into action soon and we were given the "Zone" (of the trenches) that we were to cover and told to locate a battery position and build gun pits and dugouts. I spent several days walking all over the map with Captain Lucas and found several possible positions, but we never even started work because on the 12th we were ordered to "take over" the position of another battery which was going out to rest, and on the 11th we brought the guns up and moved in—and they out.

This was a very pretty position, in the grounds of an old château. It, as well as the trenches we

shot over, and the city behind it, all came into the last picture of the 1915 Royal Academy, which you may have seen. I do not describe them accurately, nor will I in this letter give the name of any of those places, because they are more or less permanent positions in "the line" and as such, I doubt if Friend Censor would apply the "two weeks after the event" rule.

We did a good deal of firing up here, mostly in "retaliation" for hostile fire—and our only ranging was on targets—in or close behind the German front line, observation being entirely by periscope out of our front trench. There was a trench mortar across the way that used to bother us a good deal in the evenings—great, damn, big things it threw over. You could see 'em go straight up about a thousand miles, turning over and over like a sausage, and the same shape, and then fall down, down, down, and plop into some place in our lines. They weighed about one hundred pounds (all high explosives) and used to burst any old time. Sometimes it would be in the air and sometimes on percussion and then again they'd drop and lie for a second or two before they went off. Rifle grenades bothered us a lot too. About the fourth day I was up though, I spotted the trench mortar emplacement—got a couple of pegs lined up on him on the sandbags from one point of the trench, and then another cross bearing from a point around a corner about twenty yards away, and that night we threw about twenty rounds of high explosives on to him. It didn't finish him though and two days later when young Baxter (ju-



nior subaltern of the battery) was up, they started up again about five in the morning. He signalled through at once for retaliation and we sent over about forty rounds which finished him up for good, but it was in the early morning light and Bax was observing over the parapet without periscope. After the shooting was over and dawn was cracking, he was still up there looking around, and the poor kid got sniped clean through the back of his head. The eternal wonder of it is that they got him back to the base and he lived through it and is virtually going to be all right again, but he's knocked out for a good many months yet, and that was the last I ever saw of him. Another man came up from the B. A. C. to take his place.

After we'd been in this position about a week, our zone was shifted (the Lord knows why!) forty degrees right, which put us over a set of trenches about a mile farther down. These were chiefly remarkable for the size of the Battalion Headquarters Mess, where I slept when forward (a regular great room) and for the Battalion staff of the Northumberland Fusiliers who occupied it. The Colonel was a devil of a nice Johnny who only regretted that the whole of our dear country wasn't of a mind with your honorable servant—but who had gotten the fallacious idea into his head that the war would be over by Christmas, same as Henry Ford. Not that he'd ever heard of Henry, but he swore that the old Bosch was getting quieter and his strafing commencing to peter out. I didn't think so because I never knew him to be so quick on the trigger with his retaliation

yet. Twice I tried to range from the front line by periscope, and he must have had it marked of, and registered in fifties of yards, because both times before I'd fired three shouts, he opened up right over my head with a salvo of whiz bangs and I decamped. After that we gave it up as a bad job and ranged from a lovely high point on the canal bank in rear.

Well, we'd been shooting here for another week when the word came that the Division was going out for a month's rest, so it was hand over to the newcomers, pack up our traps and a three days' march way, way back into a lovely little village in France. When we left, the last of the leaves on our château trees had just about fallen and four days later the position was found and our relief shelled out of it. Three days after we arrived I found myself posted in brigade orders to "C" Battery, which I had asked for (there happened to be a vacancy imminent), and I joined at once. And here, under a Canadian Battery Commander, Captain Wurtele, a much younger man and from my own side of the water, I have been very happy ever since and have been able to do much better work. The battery is by long odds the smartest in the brigade and equal to any in the Division—the men pull together wonderfully well and take a damn great pride in the battery and all goes swimmingly.

We had a month's glorious rest at Acquin—no fatigue except harness, cleaning exercise and stables. No parades except gun drill and an occasional route march, a drill order inspection and

lots of football and sports. We won in the finals of the Divisional Artillery Football championship, but were just beaten out by a splendid team, captained by their own battery commander who is a famous amateur. The men had baths every couple of days (we've fixed up baths here in action now), and concerts every evening or so and enjoyed life hugely—while we entertained much in the mess and visited everybody else in the brigades and worked the old piano to death and rode often into the fine old city ten miles away. The Captain was away on leave for a week.

Towards the last, though, it commenced to grow monotonous and during the final week I longed to be back in action again. I was getting particular about my food and couldn't have written another letter if I'd tried.

On the morning of the 30th, the brigade trekked. We marched three days and took over the wagon lines of the outgoing battery and their guns in action on the night of January first of the New Year.

February 2, 1916.

The Division will likely be holding this part of the line for another couple of months. It is on the cards for our battery to be relieved about the twentieth for two weeks at our wagon lines, to pay a little attention to our horses and give the gunners and signallers a short rest from the more or less constant shell fire. (I mean the noise of it.) We, ourselves, would greatly prefer remaining where we are, or at least to return to the same

position after the fortnight out, but it is doubtful if they will allow us this. We shall probably take over from one of the three other batteries of the brigade and as they all have fairly decent positions (I believe) it doesn't make so much difference.

'Long about April first, it is highly probable that the whole Division will go out for another month's rest, just like the last one at Acquin, to give the Infantry a change and allow us to get our horses into condition for the summer's fighting, which (D. V.) will commence in May. And from then on for the next five months, the old Bosch will have to stand to his guns to face a series of what will be one of the most tremendous attacks in history. He may be able to hold his line—approximately—against the whole of next summer's campaign. There are several military writers who say that trench warfare has gone as far as it can go—that neither side will ever shift the other's line—the advantage being so preponderantly on the side of the defensive, etc., etc. But that theory is yet to be proved, and for my part I am more inclined to lay my bets on another card, and that is the one that I believe is to prove the Joker in the deck to Germany. It is without suit or number, and has just eight letters printed on it, all capitals—thus:

THE  
RIGHT

for all history, military and otherwise, records, that in every *great* war where matters of prin-

ciple have been the issue—the side that stood for civilization, for progress, for right—has invariably won out.

So I doubt not that one way or another we shall eventually bring the old Bosch to a reckoning. We've got the men to do it with, the men have got the spirit, the Nation is behind the Army, giving us an endless sufficiency of grub and munitions and all we want is the leader to handle this mighty weapon. When we get him—we'll beat Germany. Of course, our Staff work is rotten and always has been, but the right man will make little of whipping that into line along with the rest. When this leader of ours will come, I've no idea—although I misdoubt me it likely won't be until along in 1917, but I reckon he will bob up eventually. Whether we already know his name and ought to be able to recognize him, or whether he is still unknown even to himself, I can't guess, nor would I even say for certain that he will be a Britisher. He might be a Frenchman and still lead the British Army to victory. I only give you my impression of what seems to me, and to a great many of us, to be the thing that we have not yet—and leave you to figure out for yourselves whether I've been hitting the pipe or not.

Sorry I got off the track again—I shall have my week's leave to England, (D. V.) before this month is out and I surely am going to have a devil of a good time. Thomas is going to join me first rattle out of the box and be with me the whole time. We will spend the first three days at Stow

and the last four at "Stepmother's," one of which will be devoted to a trip to Beaumont and another to Woggles (Mr. Murray Ogilvy). And speaking of leave—that is one of the things that I do not forget to give thanks for, that you are all safely out of reach around the edge of the Western Ocean. These poor chaps go back from here for seven days in Heaven, and at the end of that time there comes to them a parting, the idea of which must have originated many years ago in Hell. Thrice blessed am I that I can go back and have a perfectly gorgeous vacation and leave it at the end with nothing more alarming than a last drink at the station with Tommy and a "So long, old Cock! Look after yourself, and *don't take any rubber money while I'm away!*"

My Christmas boxes are traced at last in London—as Stepmother writes, and will commence coming through shortly. I am standing on one foot at a time in anticipation.

I've got a hunch that somebody has wondered where I am writing this. It is my night in the observation post and I am sitting down in a tight concrete cellar—with four layers of sandbags on top—of a partially ruined house out in front of the city. There is a cheerful fire in the stove and my arm chair is very comfortable—but it has nothing on the spring bed in the corner. One of my signallers is on duty and the other is asleep, and in another minute I'll go up to the roof and have a look out over our trenches a mile away, just to see if the star shells are as frequent as

usual and the wind still fair. It is very quiet—only an occasional battery salvo or a half minute burst from a machine gun breaks the silence—that and the second signaller I spoke of, who, I just note with considerable alarm, is beginning to snore.

Good-night all, my dearest folks—it's a damned sleepy

HABS

that writes you all his love.

February Third, Nineteen Sixteen.

N. B.—Even year—come day after to-morrow—since I left Oakland for the War. . . .

*To David.*

BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE,  
25 January, 1915.

DEAR OLD BOY,

I surely have left you a hell of a while without a letter and I ought to be shot for it, but I wrote Gookie a long message to you three weeks ago that promised a speedy reform. Since then the orders from the "Gineral" were that the emplacements were to be sufficiently strong to withstand a direct hit by 5.9 in. howitzer, and the undertaking provided about ten days' hard labor for all hands. Construction on the firing line lacks that incentive of permanence which leads us through so many trials—to build beautiful homes and gardens and

*ranches* in the piping times of peace, for the sake of the pride and enjoyment that we take in the (never quite) finished result. And as for that altruistic attitude so dear to the heart of the Welsh dreamer (Harry means Tom Evans) that leads him to plant quaint and rare nuts, that they may grow into stately trees to shade the future playground of his friends' grandchildren, you might almost say that it is forgotten over here.

*All* positions are found sooner or later and this one of ours will be no exception.

I need not tell you that the accounts of your sickness have caused Tom and me more anxiety than anything that can happen over here. For God's sake don't work too hard, Davy—the result of anything rotten happening to you would be plain particular hell for all of us. If I thought that it came over my interests, I'd never face Bess and the kids.

In regard to business, I take careful note of all you have to say in regard to Alta Vista and the Stanislaus Ranch, and will be only too well satisfied with any steps you may be able to take. But I do hope that you will lead it into some form or other, that will one day help to do some part towards keeping my buttons bright, when—in the future—they bear the Eagle instead of the Crown. You've got more sound business knowledge in your little finger than the rest of the family could show by drawing out their whole accounts, and if Papa were alive, he'd say "Amen" to that.

As to the changes and improvements that you and Gookie have been indulging in, I couldn't help



feeling tickled all the time to think of the tears and the groans and the curses that you were both pouring on the unfortunate contractors' heads—just the same as I strafe everybody and everything, and sweat valuable energy when I have to build stuff over here. It's a great old game and it's surely in the blood of this family. We'd build additions and make alterations to our own graves, if we could find a plausible excuse when we're dead.

What you have to say about my ability to write and the utilization of it towards a career, I'm afraid, Davy, doesn't find a sympathetic echo in my mind. When I am taking part in new and interesting scenes (or during my year at sea and now in the war) I can write of what I see for you all and my friends to read, because I am tremendously interested and want you to share in my interest and know what the game is like;—but the idea of doing the same thing for the general public fails to attract me. Also, although I have the ability to do this fairly well—it comes as the hardest sort of work in the world to me and only the great incentive that "*I've got to tell the family*" is sufficient to drive me to it. No, old man, I reckon you'll have to write me down as the genius that wouldn't bud—as far as that line is concerned.

When this war is over, if I last out, I shall take the knowledge that I have gotten out of it home to America—where it will be needed—and as a soldier in the service of my own dear country, I hope to lead a long and useful life and

eventually to die—full of honors and very old port wine.

And as for the cigarettes which you sent, the very first, by the way, that were ever despatched in answer to my call—I reckon old von Tirpitz must have sent out a U-boat and bagged 'em. At any rate, don't worry about any of these things,—the thoughts were there for Habs, and that's what makes life worth living.

This must be all for this time. Never a day passes that I don't think of you and look forward to the brave day when, my work over here done, I shall take a long journey by sea, and marvelling muchly to find myself still alive, shall see your familiar figure coming up the companionway, and dramatically invite you to "put it there."

Fondest love to Bess and the kids and Mrs. Martin (Davy's mother-in-law).

Always devotedly,

HABS.

*To Lucile.*

3rd of February, 1916.

DEAREST GOOKIE,

The silhouettes from the Exposition are arrivé and are awfully cunning—Charlie looks a dead ringer for Henry Ford and Margie is perfect—but yours doesn't do you justice. Nevertheless they're all up and greatly admired. We grow entirely shameless about exhibiting our several sisters, sweethearts and wives on the walls of the mess—not that I've any of the latter.

You won't be sore at the last shout in this general, dearest. I wouldn't say it if I thought there was any chance of your feeling hurt about it—but you know you do love me too much and you do tell too many people about me.

Fondest, dearest love,

from

HABS.

*To E. C. O'S.*

6th February, 1916.

DEAREST STEPMOTHER,

Your post-card of the 3rd arrived this evening to horrify me with the news that that poor old letter of mine has gotten into print in spite of all my precautions. It is very complimentary of course, the *Argonaut* being such a "high class" organ—but it's bad all the same.

I hope the large outer circle of my friends and associates will be generous—such a letter should never reach any but the ones it was addressed to—but I fear me greatly of the consequences of its misplacement. However I "done my best" to stop it and there's no use worrying over the failure, but I want to have a talk with you about this when I get back.

My leave should come soon now—I am the last remaining officer of a battery (of the original crowd in the brigade) who has not been home, and although I was junior but one (wounded long ago) coming out, I have, singularly enough, been

longer in action than any, so, as I am in the Colonel's good graces at present, I should get away right after the two now in England return. I expect (D. V.) that will be about the 18th of the month, that being the anniversary of my arrival last year—because the family always has been H—l on anniversaries.

And good Lord! won't I be glad—It's funny, because I don't get "fed up" with the war, as some of the boys complain, and now of all times it is particularly queer because we are ensconced (for the moment) in the solid and comfortable abode of our own building and everything in the battery runs like a charm, but I have just got the feeling that I need a week out of it and need it bad. The minute I've finished one job I get uneasy for something to turn my hand to and can't rest or concentrate, and the only thing that has any appeal for the minute is a week's "run on the grass." In the last two or three days I have been driven to roving walks about the town and even to the ascent of the cathedral tower to search out the old Bosch by telescope, just to feel I am doing something. So all together, dearest step-mother, it is a joyful and extremely voluble "adopted" that you will greet at the door of your sweet home.

Present schedules will give me eight clear days in England and will land me at Victoria Station in the afternoon, so that I think the best program will be—first night with you, a visit to my tailors the next morning, lunch down town together, and then to Stow in the P. M. for the three days, when

I will return with Thomas for the best half of the game. Will let you know the exact date if possible before.

Best love from your

STEPSON.

## VII

### FIRST LEAVE FROM THE FRONT

This came in February, 1916. His adopted step-sister and step-brother had measles, but it was a part of Harry's happy optimism to spend his holiday at Number 7 just the same, and to cheer the invalids with his gay presence. He was oblivious to the risk we pointed out of his taking measles back to the entire British Army.

However, his confidence was justified. He had a successful and joyous leave, and returned in fine shape to the Front.

#### *Letter to Lucile from E. C. O'S.*

7 LANSDOWNE ROAD,  
HOLLAND PARK, W.  
Feb. 29/16.

DEAR MRS. BRAY,

You'll have known that Harry had his leave at last,—just in time—as all leaves are now stopped.

He “blew in”—(only our native slang is equal to the breeziness of his arrival) Thursday, the 17th, went down to Stow-on-the-Wold Friday—came back with Mr. Evans on the Monday—and

departed, alas!—on Friday, the 25th. We called it the American Cyclone. Never have I seen anything more splendidly enthusiastic, happy, uproarious; and the silence of the house, when that handsome and lively personality had gone, was really unbearable.

You will have heard from Mr. Evans that the boy looked extraordinarily well—rosy, free from nerves, and altogether in fine condition.

He's keen to get out to the Russian Front, and I tried to manage it—but Comdr. Locker Lampson, who would have taken him on the armored motor car service under the Admiralty, had just gone back to Russia. I wasn't sorry; it would have been terribly far away and un-get-at-able. Heavens knows, the front in Flanders is going to be bad enough—but nothing to Russia, nor to the present Verdun or Champagne fronts.

*To Lucile.*

B. E. F.,  
27th of February, 1916.

DEAREST,

The whole of western Europe is under snow and it's as beautiful here as it was in London.

I returned to find the whole brigade resting in the wagon lines with the exception of our own noble battery which has come straight into action in another place to take part in the recovery of some lost trenches. We've only been in three

days now, but yesterday when I showed up the position was *complete*,—ammunition all up, the battery registered and the men smiling at their work from a warm and comfortable row of dug-outs. They surely are a smart lot. Haven't any idea what our movements will be, but we're here for this show anyway. The Bosch treated us to a bombing attack last night and gave us the opportunity for twenty minutes' barrage, but have not repeated the dose this evening.

The week in England was lovely—Thomas with me the whole time, as I promised. Two days at Stow—one at Beaumont, and the last three at Stepmother's—where we spent our days between Arthur Kelsey's—the American Consulate—Woggles (Mr. Murray Ogilvy)—Bradford (Mr. H. P. Bradford)—Julie Heyneman's "California House"—the Garvins', Edmund Davises' and the Bath Club. I made up my mind at the start that if I tried to do the things I *ought* to do, my leave would go like a dream and I would return to the front a *wreck*—So I just did exactly what I *wanted* to and nothing else; had a glorious time and feel a million times better than when I went away.

The impression of the week is Stepmother and her home. She is a darling, Gookie, and a great big piece of San Francisco set down in the middle of London—my home, where I head as surely as I do for the Igloo. And, believe me, we surely made the Eagle scream all the time. I've always kept pretty clear of an accent or foreign manner in the course of the years I've spent in "foreign



parts," but I never knew how much of an American I really am until I became an officer in the British Army. Which reminds me that one of the captains in the Brigade under whom I once sat on a Court of Enquiry, told me that it was his firm belief that there should be one American in every battery!

Love and *bon soir*,

Devotedly,

HABS.

*To E. C. O'S.*

27th February, 1916.

I don't quite know how to tell you how large a chunk of the mental atmosphere in which my soul lives, has been displaced and occupied by Number 7 Lansdowne Rd. and the Irish Family who dwell therein. I can close my eyes and see you speak to Tom in extenuation of the English—or send Biddy and Terry to bed, or come back to me and what you are going to send me when the Bosches catch me—in fact I've just done it. I told you I was dependent to an alarming extent—and now the chief burden of my dependence must fall on you for the period of the war. I can't help it, it's entirely without my volition, but I wouldn't change it if I could, and I could no more separate you from my constant thoughts than I could Gookie or Tom.

9th March, 1916.

DEAREST STEPMOTHER,

All well and the brigade all in action—ourselves in the same place. I'm down for four days in the wagon lines, and what do you think! I've got a parson coming to live with me this afternoon. They must think I'm in need of being saved. Don't know yet whether he's Church of England, Jew, or Catholic.

## VIII

### SPRING

*To Lucile.*

B. E. F., AND IT OUGHT TO BE THE  
BRITISH ARMY IN FRANCE,

—because to call the damn thing an expeditionary force now is like your dating a letter to me from the Settlement of San Francisco. However—

11th of March, 1916.

DEAREST GOOKIE,

A perfectly peachy letter from you dated the 20th of last month arrived yesterday evening, and to-night I got round to a decent answer, after clearing up the rest of the correspondence.

The night is perfect and we are taking it quite easy in this position, so everything is right up for a good chin-chin.

Your Novena to our Lady of Lourdes, I have no doubt, straightened out the missing boxes. You say you didn't start it until the 11th, and if I remember right, they came the next day. I might have known She had something to do with it, because that same day I found the servants bringing in our water supply in an old one-gallon "water-of-Lourdes" can that had belonged to the departed dwellers in our house, and the familiar

blue and silver enameling of the grotto and Holy Figure, surrounded by stars, certainly gave me a start. I told the servants always to bring the water in it, and thanked Heaven that we'd some safeguard against the dead Belgian hero at the bottom of the well! I also remarked that it would bring us luck. So there's your chain and it suits me, whether or not it would appeal to the Society for Psychical Research.

That surely is hard about Allan Messer (son of San Francisco friends, killed in action)—but no doubt he died like a gentleman and has won the full benefit of all the experience and accomplishment that he was able to cram into his life. The only tragedy, as I see it, would be to feel, as one lived on and grew old, that one had ceased to progress in soul—or worse, as undoubtedly happens to many of us, that one was actually *slipping back*, losing a part of what one had already gained by struggle and suffering.

The last thing in the world that I want to do is to die—but if I ever lost the hope of going always forward, gaining a little more knowledge and a little more strength each year—I'd like to have one of these big noisy black things drop on my head *toute de suite*, and finish off at least with the credit of what I'd already gained. But even that would be a little bitter if I were not able to feel that I was still on the upward way. So here's to our ideals—and if we can't attain them in life, may we at least deserve them in death!

I was awfully tickled to hear about your seeing Edgar Rickard. I like him very much,

Gookie,—he's a fine man and a great relief in London. I surely shall be anxious to see him when I next get across. Remember that while you have now seen two who have seen me over here, I have as yet seen no one who has seen you or any one of the family since I left.

And now, dearest—there have been so many shifts and changes since the Christmas boxes arrived and I've never gotten around to telling you about it—that it's almost impossible to do justice to it now. What I remember is, that they came with the rations at seven o'clock one evening, just as the Captain and I, alone in the mess, were sitting down to dinner in front of a glorious fire. It had been a hell of a day in—(you know); the Bosch had been shelling the city heavily and at night, as sometimes happens, everything fell quiet and calm as you please.

I had just had orders to proceed on leave in two days which had put me into a damned good humor—and when the servants filed in with the two huge cases, and the six boxes of raisins from Charlie Teague, my heart gave a great leap of joy and turning to the skipper, I remarked as casually as I could, "My Christmas boxes—you know—from home." He turned round, spotted them and almost fell through the floor.

And then I went for an axe and dinner was postponed while I broke them open and took out one beautiful package after another, and spent at least ten minutes over each.

And then at the end, out of the second box came—the Heart-Tree—and that was so perfect,

dear, that I darn near cried. But I didn't—I just set it up in the middle of the table and gloried in the bright essence of California sunshine and Piedmont gardens that it radiated. And the day I left, I cut the tip-top off the tree to take back to Tommy, and then leave on my dresser at Stow—and burned the rest of it in the mess fire.

I read every card, dearest, and rejoiced over every word from that great wide circle of my friends. What a job you must have had to get all those together. I can imagine. But it was worth it—even to Dan Whelan and Private Murray. You are right, dearest, there never was a tree like it—and it lives forever in my memory.

I finished that paragraph ten minutes ago and do you know I can't remember whether there was any particular present from you in the box! I suppose there was, dearest, and I know it was lovely, but that's as far as ever I can get.

You see you wrote everybody else down and I sent 'em all their post cards on the basis of that, and of course you didn't say anything about yourself. And the great difficulty is that I just naturally think of the whole thing as coming from you. The Heart-Tree was you particularly, with some strain of Carey in its makings, but the whole pack and boodle was yours, you see, and that's the only way I can remember it. Of course, there was the diary and the second installment of the picture book, but they were New Year presents.

Well, let it go—it doesn't matter. It was the most wonderful shipment that ever reached the front in Flanders.

Nothing to add to my line of yesterday about the present and immediate future, except that some of your beloved Belgians (officers) came up to the battery this morning, and after much saluting and bowing and shaking hands, they succeeded in getting to the point that they expected to take over the position in a few days and let us move out to rest.

Night, night, dearest,

HABS.

*To Lucile.*

12th of March, 1916.

DEAREST,

Everything all right here—after the old Bosch gets through at Verdun, he'll probably turn his attention to this favorite little corner and then we shall get a chance to distinguish ourselves.

A lovely package arrived this evening from Stepmother, in consequence of which I am now full of marshmallows. To-morrow we'll have plum pudding for dinner and for the next week we'll all swim in maple syrup. And by the way, dearest, anything that comes from No. 7 Lansdowne Road lacks not of the essence of home—So *don't* have any worries on that score.

I'm for bed.

Goodnight, dearest,

HABS.

*To E. C. O'S.*

14th March, 1916.

Everything fairly quiet here, except that the Bosches are shelling this wood with the same old big black noisy ones.

Verdun is tremendous, you're right. I only hope when those operations are over and Wilhelm again turns his attacks against the Armée Brittanique that we shall stand as bravely and as stoutly as the French are standing.

*To Lucile.*

22nd of March, 1916.

DEAREST,

We've come out of action and are back in the rest area for a little while. Been here three days with lots of lovely green grass and no noise. The battery is all spruced up and ready for any degree of General's inspection. Everybody is enjoying himself after his own particular fashion, and sports begin to-morrow.

Your letter which arrived yesterday, finished up with the paragraph on Verdun, and your sorrow over the tremendous losses there—and not only by this, but by an occasional line in the same vein that has been slipping into most of your letters lately—I read between the lines the dangerous fact that you are thinking a little too much about some of the disgusting details of Life at the Front. Now, then, Gookie, forget it!



I, who am over here for the good of my soul and the greater success of the allied arms, have got to go through a number of extremely unpleasant experiences and become thoroughly familiar with all the sides that go to make up the "Romance of War"; and for me these things are good and threaten no danger to the mind, because a very few seconds after you are scared out of a year's growth by a shell arriving in the next ravine, or turned sick by the sight of some uncleared remains of a late battlefield, you have forgotten about it, and while the item undoubtedly has left a permanent *subjective* impression, its effect on the *objective* mind of you and on your good health and spirits is *nil*. You've got too many other things to think about, to worry about it for a minute after it's out of sight or sound. Out of sight, out of mind—is the rule of the soldier on active service, and the few who fail to follow it, naturally go home with a weak heart or varicose veins.

But with you at home it's different. Once you begin to worry about the harrowing details, they are *always* with you, and as you don't really know a damned thing about the actual shape or circumstance of said details, your imagination is given full play to garnish them up with all the thunder and lightning and souls writhing in torment effect, and the longer you ponder on it the worse it gets, and pretty soon you're headed right straight for the Nut Factory. Wherefore, I repeat—forget it!

Take the war news casually, and remember that every battle brings us nearer to the end.

I notice Stewart Edward White tells you to read "Between the Lines." I hope you'll pay attention to me when I tell you *not* to read it. Nor any of the other war books that are just beginning to appear in such numbers. "Sergeant Michael Cassidy, R. E.," "The First Hundred Thousand" and a few more like them. *Quand la guerre finit*—these masterpieces will be all very well to read and ponder over as excellent descriptions of the times we have lived in—I must admit they're good because I read a couple of them myself and they gave me the jim-jams for a week; but they're the wrong medicine right now for anybody with a personal interest in the War. If you've already bought "Between the Lines" you leave it for Gus and the Colonel to read—and you can bet it won't worry them!

I'm sorry, Gookie, to have had to climb on to the high horse and talk common sense to you, because I have to take a pose to do it, and you know that as well as I do, and aren't a bit impressed;—but you get my idea, and I'm just trying to remind you of something that you might have lost sight of for a minute.

More than that I wouldn't try to do because I know only too well that I couldn't fool you if I wanted to.

I can't think of another darned thing to say, except the same old

Devoted love,

HABS.

*To Lucile.*

B. E. F.,  
28th of March, 1916.

Still out at rest, dearest, and enjoying ourselves entirely.

I haven't got a bit of news this time, nor can I think of any subject that requires discussion between us. Your last letters containing no particular argumentative openings. So I've thought of something else to tell you about that I've often had in mind to touch on in former letters and that I bet a dollar you and Carey have always wanted to hear—namely, *baggage!* and as a sub-head—*clothes!*

My principal piece of impedimenta is, in common with every other officer in the army, my valise—and for the genius who invented it, my admiration surpasses all bounds, for it is the one and only thoroughly practical and in every way satisfactory piece of travelling equipment that I have ever had experience with. It is simply a case 2½ ft. wide and 6 ft. 6 inches long of (nearly) waterproof canvas, with a hollow pillow to hold clothes at the head, and a pocket at the foot, and in it your sleeping bag and blankets are made up, so that at night you simply loosen the straps, roll it out on the ground, and crawl into a warm, dry bed. In the morning you straighten it out a little, roll it up and pull the two straps tight and there you are.

Most men carry all their clothes in it also, but this makes a pretty bulky bundle and I don't do

it for three reasons. 1st—You have to unpack everything at night (and maybe set it in the mud) and re-pack it in the morning. 2nd—If ever you get to open warfare, you would have to carry such a huge bundle in the "G. S." (General service) wagon, which will probably drop a few miles astern and may not catch up for weeks; whereas, mine with only my bed, toilet articles, extra sox, handkerchiefs and tobacco, waterproof sheet and greatcoat, rolls up no larger than a grain sack and is hooked on to a very small part of the foot-board of one of my firing battery wagons from which I shall not be separated. 3rd—I haven't got all my eggs in one basket.

Instead, I carry all the remainder of my kit in a box about 24" x 20" x 15" high, built on the order of a very small sea chest, and this does ride in the G. S. wagon where it won't bother me if it is lost for a week.

The full list of my kit works out about as follows:—2 uniforms, 3 pairs of boots (1 pair Canada waterproof, knee—1 pair lace to knee—1 pair ankle boots and regulation puttees), greatcoat (fur-lined, knee length), oilskin and sou-wester, 3 changes shirts and underclothes, 3 towels—toilet articles. Plenty of sox and handkerchiefs; plenty of tobacco, matches and candles. Writing case, gloves, muffler, etc., sewing kit and a few books.

"Gum boots, thigh" are furnished by the Government and handed over to the battery when we go into the line, and I carry a little oilskin jacket to wear with them. A canvas washbasin and the

bed made in the valise completes all that is necessary to make life comfortable—and the limit that can be toted without worry.

The equipment “worn by the officer” and “carried on officer’s charger” as the Field Service Pocket book puts it, I have left out of the list to give you separate. When we parade in “Marching Order,” I wear the following:—

Sam Browne belt, on which are carried a revolver, prismatic glasses, ammunition pouch and electric torch. Two gas helmets in satchel, water-bottle, haversack.

And on the horse:—Two feeds for him, mess tin, oilskin rolled on back of saddle, saddle wallets on front, ammunition pouches on sides.

As a matter of fact, I never turn out in the regulation “Christmas tree” at all, at all. I carry my pistol, glasses and torch on my belt just to make a bluff, and one gas helmet, of course, always; but a haversack I never have used yet, and my water bottle I always make fast on to the near side of my saddle. When I go up to the trenches I carry my revolver and glasses on an old comfortable web belt I picked up out of a salvage pile at Loos, and slip a book into the little cloth satchel alongside my gas helmet. In short—I don’t carry any more than I have to.

I hope you and Carey will have a glorious time figuring this all out, and when I tell you that my servant, an ungrammatical but faithful Cockney named Turner, does my washing and mending quite well, and that it’s possible to replace most worn out and lost clothing quickly and cheaply out

of Ordnance, I know you will feel greatly relieved on the score of my comfort.

Fondest love,

From

HABS.

*To Lucile.*

B. E. F.,

8th April, 1916.

DEAREST,

We have been in action here for a week now—ten miles south of the old place and a very much healthier part of the line.

We have a Church of England Chaplain attached to the battery—a youngster and an awfully decent chap; been with us for a month now and we have a lot of fun with him. And this brings me round to a subject that must be of the greatest possible interest to you—speaking of Chaplains.

The Chaplain at the front is not present in great numbers. There are about twelve to a Division (twenty thousand men)—say four Roman Catholics, four Church of England, and four Non-conformists. Every Sunday there are compulsory church parades, and I have as yet failed to find a *single* man of Protestant persuasion whose religion means anything whatsoever to him. Church parades are the most completely perfunctory affairs that I have ever seen in my life. The men hate them like poison and growl mightily at being drawn for them.

The experience of all these non-Catholic Chaplains is alike in this—they meet with the most desperate sort of discouragement in their work

out here that it would be possible to imagine. Respect, of course, they get on all sides, and comradeship. But it is a problem to me how any of them can last six months without complete disillusionment. Contrast this with what I am now going to tell you.

Of late I have been shooting over an Irish regiment which (an ancient privilege) has its own Chaplain, and imagine my delight to find him an old friend and mentor of my Father Tim's of Beaumont. Father Doyle is his name, an English Jesuit, and in the two or three nights that we have bunked together, I have howled with joy over his tales of the Catholic side of the case. This good man, instead of having to work up interest in the minds of his fighting parish, is *worked hard* to satisfy their spiritual needs. Every morning he says mass for the reserve company behind the trenches at which every free man is present a couple of times each week. Every evening he says the Rosary in the front line fire trench for the whole battalion, and at the end administers General Absolution to every man there.

Quite as often as not, he is cut down to two or three decades of the Rosary by hostile shelling, and once, at least, men have been killed and wounded by German fire while it was being said. Add to this that when they are out at rest, every man comes faithfully to the Sacraments, and that in times of strafing this intrepid Priest goes straight to the front line, and absolves the wounded and the dying, and you have a picture of

what the Church can mean to men of faith in the midst of sudden death. He has told me that some of the acts of contrition of the wounded men have been the most wonderful things he has ever listened to—*perfect contrition*, such as he never before thought could be put into words at all.

I know what joy this news will bring to your dear heart, and I have told him about you, Dearest, and of your faith.

The other morning I was at Mass just behind the lines—two planes overhead low all the time; machine guns from the Bosch trenches popping away to beat the band; an occasional shell somewhere in rear—the whole thing was *dramatic*!

My own ideas have not changed, dearest—but I love the Church and Her priests and Her Faith—and these things give me joy to see and to tell to you.

Fondest, dearest love,  
From  
HABS.

*To Lucile and David.*

B. E. F.,  
Easter Sunday, 1916.

MY DEAREST "GUARDIANS,"

Some days ago I was having a stroll behind my O. P. on top of the big hill (from the other side of which I saw the spires of the town [Lille] once the stamping ground of Papa, Dave and Loll, (Laurence Schell) and where H. P. Bradford is now engaged at the American Relief Station) when I saw a familiar figure in shrapnel-proof



helmet, followed by a younger officer, enter the other corner of the field and come walking down towards me in the shelter of the hedge. I spotted the Star and Crown of a Lieutenant Colonel on his sleeve, so I clicked my heels together and saluted in the approved form as laid down in the King's Regulations, and promptly demanded his pass (which is required when visiting an O. P. a measure *contre espionnage*).

He didn't have one but introduced himself instead. "I'm Colonel Winston Churchill—this is Major Sinclair, my second in command."

"Oh, yes," I said, "I recognized you, Sir," and turning, I led the late First Lord of the Admiralty into my dugout.

You probably have a fair idea of his career.

In this war he is the man who ordered the Review of the Grand Fleet at Spithead, on the 30th of July, and on the night of August 3rd, instead of dispersing to their hundred stations, sent the whole lot to bottle up the German Navy, so that, on the morning of the 5th, when the War opened, Britannia held command of the seas.

He can't be over forty—looks about thirty-five—and I've wanted to meet him for a long while. He is a great friend of Mr. Garvin's, and is, as you know, half American.

He wanted to see the country we were shooting over (his Battalion being just on our right) so I pointed out the trenches, farms, redoubts, etc., for a half hour, and then he asked me if I had been through Loos. I acknowledged I had, through the centre of it, to be precise, and added

that that gory scene was my first introduction to the staff work of the British Army. He looked at me keenly for a minute, smiling, and asked me whether I was Canadian or American, and when I answered that I had the honor of being an American Citizen, he was pleased as punch—claimed kinship on behalf of himself and Major Sinclair, who also had an American mother, and asked me for a history of the crime.

So I told him of how I nearly went to him for my commission in the first place (thro' Mr. Garvin) but got it without having to bother anybody—and he told me he had commissioned several Americans in the Royal Naval Division, one of whom got the V. C. at Gallipoli, and that he wanted to enlist some American Regiments in Canada under American Officers at the start of the War, believing it would do a lot of good, but the others wouldn't stand for it (it has since been done).

Sinclair (Major Sir Archibald, to give him his full name) asked if I had taken any oath of allegiance, and I was glad to be able to say I had not. . . .

Last night—four days later—I went over to dine. They have very decent battalion Headquarters in an old farm about 600 yards from the Front Line, heavily fortified with sandbags, and as the evening was very quiet the dinner party was undisturbed, and altogether one of the pleasantest times I've had out here.

The Colonel opened a couple of bottles of very

good champagne, and I went off the water wagon and enjoyed it hugely. Of course we talked principally of the States, and their attitude towards the War, a little on the President and his administration; looked forward to the coming election and considered the Colonel (Roosevelt) etc. But later the talk drifted around to the early Naval side of the War: the loss of Craddock's Fleet in the Pacific and all the ins and outs of the subsequent traps laid for von Spee, culminating in the destruction of his Fleet off the Falkland Isles, and the exciting chase of the *Dresden* into Chilian waters, where she too was sunk. I learned a great deal which has never become common news, which I cannot tell you now, but please God, I'll have that and a lot more to tell you—one night!

After dinner we drew back around the fire, and in the first whiskey the Colonel caught my eye and proposed "Hail Columbia"—I replied, "God Save the King"; and the international toast being completed, we dropped the past and turned to that most fascinating of all subjects, especially at this time—the Future!

He did not attempt to prophesy, but he confirmed my own belief that the War will go on a very long time yet—into 1918 anyhow, barring always, the remote chance of a revolution in Germany, or the not quite so remote chance of the States' entry into the War, which we all know would shorten it at least a year. The Colonel surprised me by saying we were bound to do it sooner or later—myself, I have pretty well lost

hope, though I desire it above all things in the world.

If I could live to see our own dear Country fighting side by side with England and France—well, I wouldn't ask anything more, except the chance to get in a few licks under the Stars and Stripes. Right here I'm going to leave Colonel Churchill's dinner table (which I didn't do that night until 11:30) and state my faith to you on this subject.

Dearest Guardians—your ward is all for Peace, and by Peace I mean the genuine article that Christ called for. Not Bill Bryan's brand, nor Henry Ford's pipe dream, nor the Kaiser's substitute; but Peace for the nations based upon the doctrine of fair play, and mutual toleration, and guaranteed by the might of the alliance of these great peoples that desire it for themselves and for others.

The peace that existed in Europe before this War was a disgrace to the name—a lie to its true intention, and there is always a danger that a like condition may prevail again. Now I'm no Utopian and I can't see this as the last War, because the East is always separate, and a threat for the Future. I do believe, though, if we only deserve it, this will be the last great war between the white nations.

But Russia is great, and is not bound to us indefinitely, and unless the Hohenzollerns are driven out, Germany can never be trusted again.

On the other hand, France and England are irrevocably bound together by ties of blood,

mutual interest and mutual ideals and the United States surely shares the first and last of these ties, and if she will openly take her place with these two great friends in this fight for the World's freedom, I tell you that the first American blood which falls on Belgian battle fields will bind these three into an alliance which will endure while the world endures. Their aggregate might in the world's councils, on the side of Justice and Liberty will guarantee a peace throughout the Western World that none will ever dare to threaten.

*Au revoir*, dearest ones—

Devotedly always,

HABS.

*To Lucile.*

B. E. F.,

20th April, 1916.

DEAREST,

My last was dated all wrong. It wasn't Easter Sunday at all, but Palm Sunday and that just goes to show how little the date signifies out here. The skipper (his Captain) told me it was Easter, and I was horrified—it was mid-afternoon. Never mind, the real Easter rolled up yesterday and I got over to one of the most beautiful open air Masses I have ever seen, said by Father Doyle.

Half his regiment was present, the other half having attended early Mass (they are out of the trenches) and in the interim he journeyed round the camp and gave Communion to the sentries—kneeling with a rifle and fixed bayonet. It

was *stirring*. Needless to say I prayed for your happiness.

Of course I've been tremendously interested in the accounts of Captain Buckleton and Paul Verdier. Yes, I did send a message to Paul and hope maybe to run into him yet. If you gave him my address, he will get in touch with me. He's a great boy. I'll look up "Buck" if I ever get the chance, be sure.

Always devotedly,

HABS.

*To his Sister Georgie,  
Mrs. Karmany, at Mare Island.*

B. E. F.,  
24th April, 1916.

DOBBIE DEAR,

I've never written a word of thanks for all those noble groceries that Gookie got with your check for my Christmas present.

The fact that they are the one remaining package that did not come through, leaves me none the less grateful, dearest, and it was sweet of you as ever to squander a five-spot for Habs.

I see you've been entertaining the interned Bosch Lieutenant. That is nice, because if I should happen to come home on leave any time, you will be able to introduce us, and then Fritz and I can stroll out on to the golf course and have a nice, comfortable shoot at each other. Probably the Colonel would be willing to lend us a couple of machine guns for the purpose,—especially since we would undoubtedly provide the

links with some splendid new bunkers in the shape of our opposing trenches.

Best love to the Colonel.

Always devotedly,

HABS.

*To Lucile.*

B. E. F.,  
3rd May, 1916.

DEAREST,

Ten days since my last letter, but you've got nothing on me at that because I haven't had an American letter for a week myself.

The interval has been quite exciting, however, the Bosch having favored us with three gas attacks on this front—the first being a false alarm, the second a pukka attack with heavy shell-fire, infantry out of the trenches, and all the thrills, and the third a small affair in which he just let off a little that he had left over from the main affair. I'll tell you about the main show.

Time—10:30 P. M.

Scene—A tubular dugout on top of the high hill overlooking the trenches, same being my O. P. In the centre, a table on which is spread an artillery map. Asleep on a bed in one corner, an Officer (muh!). In the opposite corner a drowsy signaller is discovered at his telephone instrument.

Voice over telephone—ABX—ABX—ABX! Priority message all batteries. (Signaller pricks up his ears and listens to the message.)

“A prisoner who deserted from the German

lines this afternoon has been examined at Division Headquarters. He states that the enemy have the whole front line from —— to —— dug in with gas cylinders and that they are going to let it off some time during the night—the wind being now favorable—all batteries will double sentries and stand by the guns—S. O. S. guard to be doubled. Acknowledge.”

Signaller—(gently stirring me). “Sir—Sir—Gas alert—message just came through. There’s a German prisoner captured, etc., etc.”

Me—“All right, all right. Hell and damnation! Go and call the Sergeant of the S. O. S. Guard.”

(Roll out of bed and put on my boots.)

Sergeant appears at the door.

“Turn out your guard and working party and I’ll inspect their helmets.” (It is done).

Telephone—“XY—XY—XY—XY.”

Signaller—“Hello, hello—Wanted on the phone, sir.”

(I pick up the phone).

Voice—“Captain speaking—They’ve just caught a German prisoner”——

Me—(Cutting in)—“Yes, I got the message, Sir.”

Captain—“All right, be on the alert. Good night.”

I roll a cigarette and sit down in comfort to await the gas signals.

Telephone—“XY—XY—XY!”

Signaller—“Hello, Hello, yes—Wanted, Sir.”

I pick up the phone.



Voice—"Colonel speaking—have you got that message about——?"

Me—(Cutting in)—"Yes, sir, got it—waiting for the gas now."

Colonel—"All right,—keep on the *qui vive*—Good night!"

(I continue my cigarette.)

Telephone—"XY—XY—XY—XY!"

Signaller—Hello, Hello,—Yes—Wanted, Sir."

I pick up the phone.

Voice—"Adjutant speaking—they've just caught a German prisoner——"

Me—(Cutting in)—"All right, I know all about it—who started this damned show anyway?"

Adjutant—"All right—keep your shirt on. Good night."

(I light another cigarette and glance at the watch—12:15.)

Signaller—(hearing a frog croaking outside)—"Is that the gas horns, sir?"

Me—"No."

Telephone—"XY—XY—XY—XY!"

Signaller—"Hello, hello! - Yes, sir. Wanted, sir."

(I pick up the phone.)

Voice—"Captain Lucas speaking—I just wanted to know if you'd gotten a message to be on——"

Me—(Cutting in)—"Yes,—good night!"

(I resume my cigarette.)

My cigarette goes out.

I light another.

I feel sleepy.

I curse the Bosch.

On second thought I curse the telephone.

Telephone—"XY—XY—XY—XY!"

Signaller—"Hello, Hello. Yes, sir. Here, sir.  
—Wanted Sir."

I curse the phone again.

I pick up the phone.

Voice—"Orderly officer speaking—They've just been examining a Bosch prisoner at Divisional Headquarters. He says that——"

From the trenches comes the startling note of a Klaxon Horn—B-r-r-r-r-r-r-r! Br! B-r-r-r-r!

Half a dozen machine guns open up and are drowned in a crash of the opening German bombardment.

Orderly officer (trailing on)—"that the Germans have got——"

Me—"All right, shut up. Here's your damn gas—she's turned loose on the whole front and you'll have it with you in a minute! I hope it chokes the lot of you! Open up your gun fire there!"

Orderly officer—"Hey, where is it coming from?—How fast is it coming?—Has it reached you yet?"

A high pitched hissing note advises me that the Bosch is putting a barrage over our heads behind the hill and a minute later the wires are cut by the same.

Me—"Thank the Lord—free from the bloody telephone anyway." (Singing out) "Get your gas helmets out and put 'em on top of your heads."

(To the extra signallers)—“Get out and mend the break, but don’t take too many chances——”

Enter Ludlow (Same chap who was forward with me at Loos) from Right Battery O. P.

“Hello, Ludlow, your wires busted too—Hooray! Let’s get out and see the show.”

—Which we did. Picked a nice grassy spot in front of the hedge and peeled our eyes.

The whole line of trenches curving around the foot of the hill and stretching away into the distance is lit up by the bursting shells and the star rockets, and by the light of these we could occasionally catch glimpses of the clouds of gas rolling out over our lines. At the base of the hill the cloud divides and flows around it, leaving us on an island of blessed pure air. Away on the right a building bursts into flame and by its light everything shows up with stagey fire effect.

Three batteries of ours are shooting right over our heads, and on top of the hill the shells are passing very low—each one visible, for all the world like a baby meteor—and the whole combine to make a beautiful, if rather terrible sight—terrible because it’s none too sweet for our poor damned infantry in the front trenches where the cloud is thickest, and knowing that they will soon be charged by a frightened but entirely dangerous crowd of Bosches and always containing the interesting element for us, that if the attack is really going to amount to anything, they will put a heavy shell fire on our O. P.’s as soon as it becomes light enough to observe.

But I didn't believe it would amount to this, and it didn't—after an hour, the shell fire commenced to let up, and half an hour later it was all over but the shouting!

Net result next day—

Enemy debouched from his trenches only in spots—casualties almost nix considering the extravagance of the show—but the whole country bleached out to a light yellow and the lovely Springtime spoiled—which is the Bosch all over—no eye for the beauties of Nature at all. The battery was gassed, and the cow that gives my morning milk killed—Strafe the Hun!

And this is all. Been quite quiet ever since, except that they loosed their little remaining gas next night with no accompanying shell fire and there's just now come another "alert" over the wire and I've got to go and inspect helmets again—but I'll bet my bottom dollar there's no more gas.

Well, good night, dearest. My birthday was lovely—I rolled off the wagon and we had a very nice dinner and sing-song.

I don't expect the boxes for a little while yet.

Fondest love from

HABS.

*To E. C. O'S.*

BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE,  
3rd May, 1916.

DEAREST STEPMOTHER,

No, we are not "in the middle of things" but a little further south.

Yes, I don't see why I shouldn't be able to work three months' leave to go home next Christmas. There have been eight officers and men home on long leave in San Francisco since the war broke out, most of them acquaintances of mine, and I'm no good as a medicine mixer if I can't work it too. To be sure most of them were wounded but I can't get a "blighty" on demand, and hope that what I can't help won't stand in my way.

To apply through the usual channels would be hopeless of course, but I have a letter to our Assistant Adjutant General whom I will see next time I get back, and you could keep your eye open for the right man to furnish the right pull. Grounds on which the favor will be asked:

I am an American.

I'll have twenty months' service "in"—(fifteen active).

The summer will be over and all the three months will come in the quiet rainy season.

Last, but not *least*, I want to see my folks again for a little while—and don't care about my "pay while away." (D. V. I'll have £100 at Brother Cox's by then.)

So just see how you can work it, dear step-mother, and don't tell the family, nor any one else anything about it. I haven't even thought about it myself, except to decide to have a try for it when the time comes, and to mention it to you. D. V.—it would be "*bon sport*" for us to make the trip together.

Fondest love from

HARRY.

*To E. C. O'S.*

BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE,  
8th May, 1916.

DEAREST STEPMOTHER,

Your parcel came four days ago and was perfectly lovely; whether you've got ten or a hundred dollars I should say you couldn't do better than the Log Cabin Syrup, canned tomato soup, and canned plum puddings. They seem to be the greatest luxuries and it is always a gala day when a consignment from you comes to hand.

You poor dear—you must be sick about this Sinn Fein business. I guess it's a true case of—the sins of the fathers (headed by the late father Oliver Cromwell) being visited on the (innocent English) children of to-day—at a time when it hurts most. But I have yet to come across any one who wants to curse Ireland for it; every one I've seen thinks it's plain hell on John Redmond, and wants to forget about it as quickly as possible—once the real traitors are dead. Perhaps I should except my beloved regiment of Leinsters, that I shoot over so often, for they look black enough and are all for going back and personally shooting up the rebels. My only fear is for our home—that a few of the blackmailing brethren may turn it to Germany's use over there.

A letter from you is always an event and this one was more so than usual. I didn't bother you with my birthday because it's always been made too much of, and I hesitated to add to your

troubles. But I too am glad that I am April born—the names you mention of those with whom I keep company are very great gentlemen.

*(The names were those of my father, my husband, Mr. Garvin, Mr. W. R. Le Fanu, Mr. Shakespeare and Mr. Cervantes.—E. C. O'S.)*

*To Lucile.*

B. E. F.,  
9th May, 1916.

DEAREST GOOKIE,

Say—

Do you know that your letters have been getting just a wee bit measly as to space lately? I know that you've been working yourself to death over these damned charity stunts, but just the same you've got to fill up a few more pages for Habs on the average. You haven't really talked to me for a month—only given me the news and that isn't the nicest kind of letter even if it has come oftener. So the next time my hours of the week roll around—Break away—Break away from the 'phone and Clare and French orphans—and roll out a little heart to heart, dear. I know you must have something to chin with Habs about, because it's so long since you sprung the last one—

I apologise and am ashamed of myself—

Over here this week very little to record. Erny's letters re the Skipper's departure give me something to arrange—so I must go over and

call on "Winston" again soon and find out what branch of the half-dozen Naval Auxiliary Services he should connect with, and if possible get a letter to arrange the matter.

Under the influence of a few days' gentle rain the countryside is regaining its green and covering up the traces of late gas attack.

I read my *Life* and *Post* and the *American News* with the keenest anticipation. Great things are forming in the distance and I pray that Germany may be caught in a net of her own making.

Fondest love, dearest,

From

HABS.

P. S.—I feel I ought to write all about this pitiful Sinn Fein business with its horrid stroke at the real Irish patriots and fighters, but I guess Stepmother will clear it up.

*To Lucile.*

B. E. F.,

17th May, 1916.

DEAREST,

All quiet on the western front and I dare say you'll think I've been pretty quiet too—for about ten days.

We are settling down to it, I expect, a big job to be done and no hope in life for ourselves or the rest of the world, until it's accomplished. So here's to it, and let's send the yard aloft to the tune of a good swingin' chantey.



And really I feel better about the war than I have for a long while. Not that I've ever had fears, but just that there's so damned much talk and nothing to show for it. The Sinn Fein business, the fall of Kut, more ships sunk and our blockade of Germany loose as ever—really the one bright spot in this whole stormy spring has been Verdun and that has not been England, but France. And God be good to 'em—the French have been marvellous. Great, Big, Wonderful, Invincible, Glorious—one runs out of adjectives. What they faced in that salient will not be known for years—it will have to leak out in drops to be understood. A full description would cram the brain to nausea. And in the face of all these bad points, I cannot help feeling that things will be looking up soon. It's always darkest just before dawn, and I must say I really look for the summer to see the great work well begun.

And America—Heaven—how I watch her!  
God grant that her duty become clear.

From

HABS.

*To Lucile.*

BELGIUM,  
30th May, 1916.  
"Decoration Day."

DEAREST,

When I got back to the battery the day after I sent my letter to Carey—I had the big box brought into the mess and opened it—and what

do you suppose it was? No more nor less than the box of groceries that was Margie's and Dobbie's Christmas present, shipped from home in November last, six months ago. Wouldn't it kill you?

Well, it only goes to show that nothing is ever lost in England—only delayed, and on the strength of it I've written Queen Alexandra's F. F. F. and asked 'em to speed up the dispatch of the birthday box.

The groceries were perfectly lovely—not a mistake in the choice of a single article and all "home products." I have been full of prunes, figs, tamales and maple syrup ever since they arrived and the supply bids fair to last the mess a fortnight or more.

This has been the principal thing of note for me on the western front this week. The fighting down around the Vimy Ridge, we hear, has been quite heavy and Verdun continues—the idea of the German Staff seems to be to "fight it out on those lines, if it takes all summer," and break France by sheer weight of men, metal and ferocity. They seem to lose sight of the fact that the Franco-British line in the west is one and inseparable—all under the immediate command of "*notre Joffre*" and that when he feels the strain on the French armies becoming too strong—he has the reply ready to his hand. And for this reason, I judge, that although I don't believe the actual breaking of the line will be attempted, yet the summer must surely see some rare fighting up

and down the front, which will be productive, we hope, of a banner crop of "good Germans."

If it is not stopped, I shall probably be on leave about July 1st, and if the Skipper slips through safely, that will mean that I'll see him in town and revive old traditions for a few days.

It is a great joy to know that my letters seem numerous to you, dearest—yours seem to arrive every other day.

Always devotedly,  
HABS.

## IX

### SHELL SHOCK

To E. C. O'S.

9th June, 1916.

DEAREST STEPMOTHER,

Nothing less than a calamity, I have got to tell you—a little over a week ago I got such a bad time in a shelling that it (afterwards) cost me my nerve. This comes rather as a jolt—but I am forced to realize that it is by no means a sudden shock, but only the culmination of the long strain, and nerves that have always been extremely jumpy.

The upshot of it is that I am to be transferred back to the Divisional Ammunition Column (whence I came, by the way). My Colonel has been very kind.

So it seems that I am due to know the lesson of *humble* service.

I've written the Skipper to suggest that he go down to Fishguard and spend the interval, until I get over on leave, with Tom. I've no doubt they will send me off soon after I join the column (in the next couple of days that will be) as my time is due here now, and I need the few days' change.

Don't be too shocked at my bad luck—I reckon I've always had too damn much vanity and low-

down selfish ambition in my nature, and the last week has certainly served to knock out a large portion of both; and if it doesn't make you stop liking me I can stand it.

Will let you know my arrival date as soon as I get it myself.

Best love to Terry and Bids. Always your devoted

STEPSON.

*To David and Lucile.*

BELGIUM, 15th June, 1916.

MY DEAREST GUARDIANS,

Two weeks since I sent either of you a line—and now I've got some very bad news for you, indeed.

After nine months' active service and a little over six actually in the line with my battery, as a result of a rather bad shelling that I came in for on the last day of May, I fell into such a parlous state that I had to leave the Brigade. Five days ago I was transferred back to the Ammunition Column—which works two or three miles in rear of the trenches and rarely comes under fire.

I shall not attempt to write a detailed account of the matter. In the first place I shrink from living over again in mind the unhappy half hour that was the occasion of my smash, and in the second, I have no desire to drag you through it. *Après la guerre*, maybe—if you like.

It was, after all, nothing very terrible—situations far more nerve trying and dangerous are occurring hundreds of times daily on this battle front and men are standing up to them. This time happened to be the culmination of the strain for me.

What happened was that the Bosch started shelling the neighborhood of my O. P. A dugout nearby was blown in with three men in it and two of the signallers and myself had to go in and get them out. A little later my own dugout became the target and we had to abandon it and get them away to the field dressing. There were several casualties.

Always before this, after a shelling, I have been able to let it roll off my back once it is over. The only time I got into a bad state was after the seven steady weeks of Ypres, and then my leave came just in time and gave me a chance to forget it. This time I failed to recover my poise.

The next day it was my turn to go down to the wagon lines, and I hoped that the week's comparative rest would set me up. My second day down, a Bosch balloon observer mistook my horse standings for a heavy gun shelter and opened on me again with six inch. I lost one man with his foot blown off, but managed to get the horses away, and all clear with no further casualties. This, of course, added to the strain, and before the end of the week, through lack of sleep and the trouble preying on my mind—I had to take myself to the doctor.

The Brigade M. O. pronounced me unfit for

duty—suffering from shell shock and severe nerve strain and advised me to go before the medical board, resign my commission, and take some months' rest; but I didn't feel that I could do this. It was too much like quitting—and although I don't suppose that I will be able to face shell-fire again as a steady thing—the winning of the war is still the greatest need in the world and I owe it the best that I can give, no matter how little that may be. The Ammunition Column is a part of the Artillery which rarely comes under fire and it seemed to me that I could do the work there all right.

I took the matter up to my Colonel, and he having also suffered at the hands of the Bosch, was extremely kind—saw the General on my behalf and five days later I found myself posted away—

Don't be too badly shocked at this having happened to me. The strain of modern trench warfare is very great and is unceasing. Day or night it never relaxes and although you can seldom put your finger on the cause—one is physically tired the greater part of the time. Men stand up to it in various ways—the strength of religion, lack of imagination or natural phlegmatic temperament, a sense of humor, and the ability to bluff one's self out of it—are the usual means to endurance.

The last two are what have kept me going. But given a highly nervous temperament and the damned active imagination that goes with it—the chances are that they will prove your downfall sooner or later. What has happened to me

has been a familiar phenomenon to the Medical Corps on both sides since this war opened.

Conversely from this—do not delude yourselves into thinking of me as a broken hero. It would be quite ironical, because as a matter of fact, I have broken down rather easily. It is extremely unfortunate—and that's about all there is to it.

During that first bad week I lived with some very dark thoughts, indeed, for company—but now that I am relieved and still given a useful piece of the great work to do, I am coming out of it. A lot of rosy dreams are gone galley-west, of course, but then the most futile of my illusions have accompanied them. The time has come when I find that I must take myself as God and my ancestors made me—for better or for worse, and in the full realisation of my deficiencies, prepare to be content with my equipment and to live my life along such lines as will contribute the greatest amount of good to the world in which I live. At present, this means looking after the bodily welfare and military efficiency of some hundred horses and eight men of the D. A. C.

Will you circulate this letter through our general list, and let my friends know that I have left the fighting forces, and am tending ammunition for the good of my soul and the future discomfiture of the Bosch—until further notice.

Always devotedly,

HABS.

Hope to get on leave in four days and to see Tom, the Skipper and Stepmother.



## X

### LAST LEAVE

When Harry came to Number 7 he was, for him, extraordinarily quiet. He had gone through fire, literally and figuratively. But one looked in vain for any exterior trace of it beyond this unusual silence.

We kept him busy and amused. Fortunately he had the Skipper on his mind, Captain Fleming having made the long sea journey from San Francisco to offer himself to the Naval Auxiliary Service in England.

By now, too, the boy had a wide London circle of enthusiastic friends to occupy him. But it was in long talks at evening when the house was still that the shuddering history of that appalling last May night could be realised.

The experience had cut across his spirit like a whip lash. It was long before the curiously hurt look, like a child's, slipped away from his eyes.

But rest and change, the delighted pride we all felt in him, his own invincible gaiety, won a gradual triumph. It would have been easy to get a three weeks' extension of his leave, but the boy was firm in keeping to his original seven days.

The last night of his visit was a real bit of California; the half dozen of us—Harry, the Skipper, Tom Evans, Clarence Carrigan, Mrs. Eleanor Egan—knew the Golden Gate as we did Lansdowne Road—all of us knew beloved Piedmont. Harry was once more his rollicking keen self; the nonsense and affectionate slangy banter were, to quote the boy, "Sure the purest San Francisco, not London!"

Next morning he had to leave by seven-thirty—but a brief delay in the train's departure brought him back from Victoria in breathless haste for the three minutes this gave him at Number 7. Who but Harry would have bought the taxi-man, "body, soul, and bonnet," driving like mad across London for the chance of "three minutes with his Irish Family?"

We hurried him off. A moment might mean a lost train, a lost boat, failure to report his return on time. The taxi-man grinned as the tall soldier, glowing, radiant, flung open the door. It was still early morning in the quiet of Lansdowne Road, the lovely green of June trees behind that laughing cavalier.

This was to be our recollection of him.



THE LAUGHING CAVALIER



## XI

### RETURN TO FRANCE

*To Lucile.*

BELGIUM, 2nd July, 1916.

DEAREST,

First of all, I hope you got my cable from London on leave. I knew you would be worried, and sent it to allay your fears on the long interval which followed my letter of the 30th May,—and the greater anxiousness which would follow the receipt of the next one written three weeks later. I hope that the assurance that I was on leave and all O. K. on the 24th of June, will have tided over this anxiety, and from now on I hope that I'll feel up to my usual weekly shouts. With a little luck, I feel sure that my recovery will take a normal course, and that my tone of thought will become daily more cheerful. And as it cannot but reflect itself in my letters, you will feel happier after each one, dearest sister.

I had a most memorable leave. The meeting with the dear old Skipper and the six days in his company were a great event in our friendship. Dear old Tommy was up, of course, for four days, and I think enjoyed himself very much. The one who does me more good than any one in England (except my beloved Stepmother) is

Clarence Carrigan, Yankee Consul. He and the Skipper and I have struck up a most joyous union—we've gone so far as to form the American Society of B.F.C.'s (I'll explain one day; it is a glorious joke!) to which Erny is to be admitted when we reunite inside the Golden Gate. No other need apply.

I dined one evening with Colonel Winston Churchill and afterwards to the theatre. He is going to place the Skipper if it can be done—and if it's utterly impossible, he (the Skipper) will have the full satisfaction of knowing that he did his utmost to help.

I returned from leave in company with a very decent Australian Gunner Captain, whom I'd gone over with. We took it easy, stopped a whole day and night in Boulogne, making up lost sleep and came comfortably up to the line the next day.

A rather pleasant surprise awaited my arrival, for I found Nelson Zambra the new commander of the Section. I've known him a year and more, and he is a good Indian. The men of the Section are a very good lot—there's nothing wrong with the horses, and so I don't know why things shouldn't go very well indeed. The other subaltern is a chap who came out in January and has been smashed up somewhat in the same way as myself.

Already—although the sound of a shell still sends my heart action up to approximately a thousand a minute—I am beginning to take a more normal view of things. The moments of depression come farther apart—and the rest of the time

I see things in a much more endurable light. I realise that I must be philosophical about it. Steady is the word—and we'll see the great work through to the end yet. (And no doubt live to brag about it!)

So-long, for a few days. I have a hunch that I'll want to write again soon.

Devotedly,  
HABS.

*To E. C. O'S.*

BELGIUM, 5th July, 1916.

DEAREST STEPMOTHER,

Say whatever you like to Gookie now—I have not been able to write very much of it—I know beforehand the volume it would run to if I set about putting my thoughts of the evil month of June 1916 onto paper. So I'm not going to try it. Will hit the high spots for her later.

Don't worry about me from now—I am feeling much better. This does not mean that I'm not going to write you as full an account of the process as I can, I'll start any old time now. The thing I am afraid of, when I do start, is that because of the nature of the thing it will all be talk of self in my letters—The Great H. A. B.—I,—Me,—Myself,—in short the thing that has rendered my twenty-four naïvely egotistical years so screamingly funny in the light of recent events. If I were a god to see it all—I must have split my sides over the spectacle of the would-be soldier of fortune—this last month; but, filling the

uniform myself, I've more often wept. Now it is to laugh and thank Heaven for the disillusionment—since my luck seems to have outlasted it. But as I say, I'm afraid it's going to be bad, writing this way about myself—one must get away from it—sink oneself into the work which must go on.

Surely you haven't wanted me to be shoved back from what ought to be my share of the work? I think that paragraph was to soothe my spirit over what is done. If you can pray, and mean it, I believe it becomes an influence—if it be not for yourself.—If that's right, "Pagan or Puritan" matters not a bit.

Do you know I thought that Gookie must have *known* of my bad time—it hurt so much I thought she couldn't fail to feel it——

Best love from

HARRY.

*To Lucile.*

8th July, 1916.

DEAREST,

I had the loveliest dream about you last night that you could imagine. Got away for a week and walked in on you in some dream castle of home that was a combination of the Airship (Davy's house) and Bunny Hutch (Lucile's). You were on the second story porch—lovely as a rose, and with the emotion of eighteen months' separation shining out of your eyes—and I just chucked off my gas helmet and belt—climbed up



the side of the house and grabbed you in my arms. It was very sweet.

We've been moving about a little, but have returned, and to-night we are "tenting on the old camp ground" which has been considerably mussed about, by a three days' stay of some colonial troops.

I am feeling better every day now—though not just in the mood for a long letter—which you will understand.

They talk of holding up all correspondence for six weeks. I don't think they will, but if it happens, you won't worry. Stepmother would let you know right away, of course.

Fondest love, dearest,

HABS.

*To E. C. O'S.*

8th July, 1916.

DEAREST STEPMOTHER,

For the love of Mike! don't lengthen the interval between your letters any more than you have to—it is too great a joy to deprive me of lightly. As to the other side of the action, I don't know—Frankly, I don't believe I could keep a promise to send word daily—the only daily rite I've ever been able to perform faithfully is a "Hail Mary" nightly for Gookie, that I promised when I came to the war.

You're dead right about that money matter—it's rotten to get money back that has been given in love. Money's dangerous stuff anyway—splits up families and has other unpleasant results.

I had the shock of my life to-night. Picked up an Australian magazine called *Life*, left behind here with an old bunch, and opening it in the middle started to read down a column under a sub-heading "Firing on the Stretcher Bearers"—Thought it read familiar and turned back to the title of the article a page back "Fighting As the Fighters See It" "An American Diary of a Five Day's Battle" by Lieutenant H. A. Butters! I almost sank through the floor—it was that damned *Argonaut* letter copied. Very glad I got ahold of it first—I've pitched it away.

My old battery Commander in C-107, Captain Wurtele, has just been given command of the 37th Anti-Aircraft battery and wants me to join him there. I shall probably do so in the next month or two. It is about as disgustingly safe as the D. A. C. but I believe it is extremely interesting work and he's crazy about it. I won't write home about this until I go there, so don't mention it yet.

*To Lucile.*

BELGIUM, 15th July, 1916.

DEAREST,

Your letter of June 25th in to-day's mail—you guessed right—Tom, the Skipper and I, also H. P.

Bradford were in Piccadilly that Sunday afternoon together. Good guess.

But look here, sister mine, where do you get this stuff about my coming home? You seem to look for it pretty soon, yet you couldn't have heard of the commencement of our offensive in the Somme when you wrote that letter. It's a new tone for you to take entirely.

Mind, dearest, I'm no pessimist—and now of all times I feel tremendously encouraged about an earlier termination of the war than we have looked for. If we can keep on as we are going now until the winter closes down on us, there is no shadow of a doubt but that it will put an awful crimp into Germany and probably a worse one into Austria. It is hoped that, in this case, Germany will give us peace on our terms before we have to open next summer's campaign. This seems to me most unlikely (and don't quote it), but I do think that we might be able to finish the job some time in 1917. As far as my return is concerned, the only plan I've ever made about it is to avoid the trans-continental journey if possible—and if there's any way of getting back by sea, I'll take it. But all this is considerably in the future.

There are guests in the mess and everybody's shouting so that I can't hear myself think. Will probably add more later.

Devotedly,

HABS.

*To Lucile.*

FRANCE, 23rd July, 1916.

DEAREST,

Three letters from you to-day——

Leave to return home is out of the question, dearest, these people have been too kind to me as it is, to bother them further—and besides, I have no wish to see home again until the war is won. You are the only one who understands—at all. To the others it is some far off dream of exciting news to read about. What does it mean to them! NOTHING AT ALL! They don't realise what England is standing for any more than they understand what made the moon! Tell them that she is standing for THEIR freedom and right to live in the world free from the rule of the Prussian brute, and they'll laugh at you! Ask 'em——

There's no use going on with this tirade—they're all right and just the same as these people were before the war. Let a danger to the States appear, and they'd all come up to scratch; but it takes time and suffering to learn the price of war.

I'm feeling quite all right—don't worry about my nerves. I've had no breakdown like your own terrible experience; I've only been about half scared to death—that's all.

Devotedly,

HABS.

## XII

### TWO BOYS

It does not happen to every one to know, well, and at the same time, two extraordinary personalities.

The writer may be accused of exaggeration in claiming two "stepsons" of such unusual calibre as Harry Butters and Gerard Garvin. Perhaps only the incalculable drama of the Great War could have made possible the intimate association in one mind of two such beloved and dissimilar and powerful characters.

And the generosity of a fourth factor made the connection tangible; put what is hard to speak into the spoken word; turned, as it were, an indefinable bond into a breathing link. The boys never met, but they are to live together in a thousand hearts. The father of the one who was first to die could write of the other, who so soon followed, the appreciation with which this volume opens.

## XIII

### GERARD

"Poets of England, where are you to-day?  
If I, removed by nigh three hundred years,  
From English soil, share thus your hopes and fears,  
And, young no longer, plan to join the fray,  
What swords are at your gates that you delay  
Your passage to the thundering frontiers?  
The heart of Bruce was hurled beyond the spears,  
And one as great hath shown you now the way.

Say not, 'Why place a weapon in his hand?'  
Say not, 'He could have written many a book  
To render better service to his land.'  
There comes a time when sterner things must be,  
And all the words of Byron and of Brooke  
Match not the stand they took for liberty."

Some one sent this sonnet of George Sterling's from California to Harry. Where the heading was "The Death of Rupert Brooke" he changed it to "The Death of Gerard Garvin," and at the end he altered the lines to

"And all the words of Garvin and of Brooke  
Match not the stand they took for liberty."

Harry in turn sent it from the trenches to London, where it fluttered in, a late July evening, to friends who loved both boys, and who sat in a high Chelsea window, watching twilight shroud the

tranquil Thames, talking of Gerard, who was killed the week before, and of Harry, who had but four weeks to live.

The boys had never met. Never were two more widely differing types. Both brilliant, very tall, comely to look upon. Both beloved beyond the ordinary. One, American, dark, bubbling with talk. One, English, blonde, silent. Both of Ireland, though the American traced the most distant of descents, and the Englishman was of direct Irish parentage.

For many months they moved on the same "thundering frontiers," within hearing of each other's guns. They were killed, one five weeks after the other. They lie now, not seven miles apart, on that wide battlefield of the Somme.

Harry was twenty-two when he reached us in London, but Gerard was only fourteen when he first came into our lives, in Oxfordshire. A tall reserved boy, apparently destined, like many sons of brilliant fathers, to silence. Yet when he talked, there was an ease, a vividness, that pertain to genius. To an American he seemed typically English, as one associates that race with uncommunicative cold withdrawal. But underneath there was a tenderness that became, when one found it out, inexpressibly touching. One learned that this very withdrawal masked not only the intolerance of youth, but the tolerance and benignity of a mature mind.

The boy had genius. One may say this with certainty only now and then. In Gerard's case

one says it definitely. Had he lived, he would have molded finally into a great man, a world figure.

Educated at Westminster from 1908 to 1914; easily the most brilliant mentality there; curiously too, their champion fencer (he won the cup for his school twice at Aldershot); author of some clever papers for the *Elisabethan*, the Westminster College Monthly; winner of an Oxford scholarship; a genuine musician . . . many the scribbled musical theme we used to find tossed aside in that little house under the Chilterns! . . . A poet at eighteen. A profound historian at nineteen. A captain at twenty . . . for the Great War cut across that dream of a scholar's happiness at Oxford, and Gerard was amongst the first to go.

He carried his mental aloofness into the trenches. It was part of his genius, that, just as he could have been a musician, an historian, a critic, a statesman, a journalist, so he showed the makings of a great soldier. One sees him, tall, pale, the fine profile bent a little over a volume of Meredith or Froissart, the keen eye turning nevertheless at intervals toward his men, or the distant enemy lines, or the immediate route of his own advance. He took Milton with him into the dug-outs. He wrote, in brief moments back of the firing line, an astonishing essay on Turenne's strategy.

On the night of July 22nd, 1916, he led two companies through the dark, over broken unknown country, to attack the German lines; his



only guide a square inch of paper, with the probable positions roughly indicated. A night out of the Inferno, in that devastated country; the repeated slow advance into the blackness; desperate appeals for officers from a regiment north of them, but unavailing, for now Gerard and a young subaltern were the only ones left to lead this lessening company.

Did the tall figure, straightening the weary stumbling line, show too plainly upon some comparative brightness? At that moment youth, and the devotion of youth, stand outlined against the murky horror of war . . . strange foreign setting for that English spirit! Then fall. To breathe a little longer. To send back the message, "Carry on!" Then silence.

Too near the German lines for recovery, the beautiful white face looks up for many days to those unfamiliar skies.

The boy was twenty. Can the loss of such be measured?

Harry, though he had never known Gerard, had been received like a son in the Garvin household; revered Gerard's father; was to owe him the recognition that followed his own death (even this little book is directly due to him). And now, five miles away, and soon to follow, salutes Gerard:

"What a magnificent end it is for his life!"

*To E. C. O'S.*

FRANCE, 28th July, 1916.

DEAREST STEPMOTHER,

Have not been receiving any mail from you during the past few days, so the last one I have to answer is the one with the chapter out of the O'Soulivan's life.\* I enjoyed that immensely—the talks of our dear San Francisco and all the old names—Ross Valley,—San Pedro,—Point Lobos,—the feuds and the shootings,—the swimming in the bay. Lord, it was homelike! and it seemed like a young man, writing it to-day.

I haven't yet got last Sunday's *Observer*, as it still goes to the battery, but I'm going to ride over for my mail this afternoon.

I wonder if he (Mr. Garvin) feels as good as he did a week ago?

*To E. C. O'S.*

FRANCE, 28th July, 1916.

DEAR STEPMOTHER,

I have just read the news of Ged Garvin's death. It is terrible—I couldn't possibly write to Jim or to his mother—it's bad enough to have to write to you about it, and when I know your heart must be aching so hard, I can't think of what they must be feeling.

\* An interview with Denis O'Sullivan in an old copy of one of T. P. O'Connor's papers.

I pray that you and they may be comforted somehow, by the thought of what a magnificent end it is for his life—the greatest luck that can come to any man. Will you tell them some day how much I grieve for him? I dread to hear of the results at home.

All the love and sympathy in the world for you, dear stepmother,

HARRY.

## XIV

### AUGUST LETTERS

*To E. C. O'S.*

FRANCE, 5th August, 1916.

I *have* given your name and address to my Captain, to notify you right away in case of my being wounded, and I need not harp on the fact that the same is an unlikely contingency in the Column. I have told him something about you so that he would write you a thoroughly sympathetic letter. His name is Nelson Zambra, and he is a very good Indian—member of the Bath Club—and a man I always liked.

10th August, 1916.

It is marvellous to me how Garvin holds to his mission, his words are unshaken as ever, and it is indeed a noble song that he sings.

14th August, 1916.

Sorry I've not been able to keep my promise about writing you of the way I feel. Reason is, I haven't felt like writing at all. Got off the first decent letter of the last two months to Gookie yesterday, and it was only about five of these dinky papers.

I feel about the same. Don't seem to have my-

self in hand, and am tired—it's not lack of sleep either. I suppose one always recovers nervous strength slowly. Tell Gookie nothing to worry her please, and by the same token, don't worry yourself. I am not at all unhappy and I think I am going to be all right again before the winter.

*To Lucile.*

FRANCE, 8th August, 1916.

DEAREST,

Now that I have got over the first nasty shake-up and begun to sleep again and to use my common sense—which has happened in about three weeks—I am all right as long as I keep clear of the shelling; but the sound of a crump coming through the air puts the wind up me in a most ungodly fashion, and I'm afraid will continue to do so now for many a day.

I still don't feel much like talking about it;—in fact, it's left me with an intense disgust of talking about myself at all—and this is not because I'm mad at myself. I'm not, any longer—but just because personal considerations of any kind become so damned trivial in the light of the great work that is going on. And still I realise that you must be worrying about me all the time and waiting to know what my attitude is going to be—so that you may be able to judge whether I have gained or lost by the experience. I must try to tell you.

Myself, I am content with what has happened

—Perhaps that will tell you more than anything. I haven't got any bitterness nor any regrets. I am glad that I was able to give nine months' fighting service that was as good as the next man's, and now I'm quite satisfied to be doing the work of the Column. I want you to know all about it, of course, dearest, and probably after the summer fighting is finished, and we settle down again to what we hope will be the last winter of the War, my letters to you will become lengthier and more analytical—but for the present I repeat—suffice.

Should I be called up to replace a casualty, as is of course quite on the boards in such times as these, I feel that I could summon the necessary strength to do the job—but I shall not go unless I am needed, because it would be a strain out of all proportion to my present strength.

All this ought to reassure you of my mental well being. For the rest, I am sleeping soundly, eating tremendously, drinking not at all, and getting plenty of interest out of life.

My Captain is a particularly nice chap, Nelson Zambra, a member of the Bath Club which papa used to belong to, and he is thoroughly companionable with me. And the Column provides plenty of work to keep us all busy.

I hope that I'll be able to get back to my old regularity in letters now, dearest, and although they will be short and contain no news—if they keep cheerful I know that's what you'll like best.

Fondest, dearest love

from  
YOUR BOY.

*To Lucile.*

FRANCE, 17th August, 1916.

DEAREST,

Lots of mail from you to-day—bless you forever—including Carey's long and sympathetic plea to come home. As I've lately explained the impossibility of that, I won't answer again, but I'm none the less touched at her dear concern. Reassure her that I'm going to be all right without it.

Re the tobacco—none has come through yet, but I've no doubt it will in good time and by the way, dearest, it almost makes me laugh to think of the huge amount you are sending. Of course some will be lost I suppose, but once it starts to arrive, I shall certainly never be short again, which is something to look forward to.

Don't send any papers. I always smoke French ones which cost me a penny here and would cost you ten cents at home—and——

*Don't* send any to Tom! Its importation into England is forbidden by the new law, and it will all be confiscated. It's only by virtue of my being at the Front that you can send it through to me. I will take care of Tom's supply—if I have to smuggle it to him. Never fear!

And that puts me in mind of a question I've been meaning to ask you a long while, namely: What are the Colonel and Dobbie going to do after their three years' term at Mare Island comes to an end next Spring? I'm awfully anxious to

know all their plans, so don't fail to pass the word along to me.

Fondest love, dearest,  
from  
HABS.

Mid August passed, and Harry was still with the Ammunition Column, and in consequence, to use his own words, "disgustingly safe."

But on the 20th he wrote to the Chaplain the letter which follows. Only two days later he was called back, and to Colonel Coates' brigade. In the grim commonplace of these tragic times . . . how easily we bandy words about! . . . he was to "replace a casualty."

*To  
Capt. George R. Milner,  
Chaplain to the Forces.*

Sunday, August 20th, 1916.

DEAR PADRE,

These are troublous times with many uncertainties. Any day I may have to replace a casualty in one of the batteries—and if I should happen to get wiped out, there are one or two things that I should like done on account of my people—particularly of my sister, Mrs. R. A. Bray, whose address is 323 Bonita Avenue, Piedmont, California, U. S. A.

Just write her a nice cheering letter and give her the pertinent details. How I got it—what I



was doing—when I went up from the D. A. C. (where she knows I have been since my nervous smash)—location of grave, etc., etc. She is mother, sister and everything else that is dear in the world to me, and she will get little news other than what you send her.

Please reiterate to her how much my heart was in this great cause, and how more than willing I am to give my life to it. Say all the nice things you can about me, *but no lies*—and you might get Colonel Coates (if it happens in his brigade) to send her a line.

Try and have the Roman Catholic padre plant me and you can tell her that—it will give her greater consolation than anything—and please put after my name on the wooden cross—the bare fact that I was an American. I want this particularly, and want her to know that it has been done so.

Thanks and love, Old Boy,

H. A. B.

*To Lucile—Received three weeks later,  
or a week after the news of his death.*

FRANCE, 22nd August, 1916.

DEAREST,

What a lot of your dear letters have come this week,—and the last—even with its bad news of Margie's (his sister Marguerite) being laid up—the best of all. I surely hope she is much better. Give her my love and wishes for her happiness.

I think I have set your mind somewhat at rest

already as to the nature of my trouble, so that you will no longer be picturing me to yourself enduring any repetition of your own terrible time—and I think the tone of my letters cannot have failed to show you an increasing cheerfulness. May God forgive me for ever allowing you to think I was suffering as you supposed. One is so damned selfish and thoughtless in the brief moments of even a light mental depression, that one makes things look blacker than they are.

— One point that you mention forms a rather remarkable coincidence. Two months ago when I was feeling the worst—in fact, at the very time that I broke down—I would have given anything in the world for the strength to hang on to myself and continue on in my battery. I knew that it was utterly beyond the strength that was in me, and I knew that if I were as you are, I might be able to draw this courage from outside of me—in fact, from the Church.

I went over, and spent an afternoon with my dear friend, Father Doyle, and for hours we went over it all. Before I left, I even made my Confession to him, for I earnestly craved help of God.

And this is the place where the little item comes in that will please you.

I took my Rosary to bed with me, night after night, and drew comfort and consolation from its simple beads. It seemed to link me with you—and with Mother—and with that other Blessed Mother—that she and you love so well.

And this brings me around to another tragedy

of the War—(Remembering always that tragedy is so often the highest good)—Father Doyle is dead—Always in the front trenches when the shelling was heaviest, he was terribly wounded three days ago, tending some of the dying that had been caught in the fierce counter-shelling that precedes the attack. They got him out the same evening, and down to the dressing station, but there was no hope of his recovery. He died the same night, after great suffering, I suppose.

The last, long rest and the reward for courage and fidelity are before him now—his suffering all behind. God will certainly rest his soul—but his regiment will miss him sorely.

He was buried this morning—I was unable to get to his funeral, being up the line with ammunition.

You are quite right about Dobbie, dearest—she's all you say. . . .

(If my chances were as good as <sup>his</sup> ~~hers~~ in the next world, I'd feel I had too much of a cinch on it.)

Fondest, dearest,

from

HABS.

To E. C. O'S.

FRANCE, 21st August, 1916.

Kathleen Norris's letter is perfectly lovely—yes, I love to read other people's letters, when there's no objection. Not so much at home, but when I'm away like this. Getting it enclosed in

one of your letters, it gains charm and interest enough from the privilege to make it a treat.

No, I haven't enough to do, and have far too much time to think. But with luck I'll join my old skipper in Anti-Aircraft in a month or two, and that will be an interesting and self-respecting job "for the duration." As if it mattered a damn, when the war's all that counts to us all!

Love,

HARRY.

*To E. C. O'S.*

FRANCE, 22nd August, 1916.

~~—~~ DEAREST STEPMOTHER,

Just going up to one of the batteries to replace a casualty. It's too bad that it comes while I'm in bad shape, but it can't be helped and it's surely what I'm here for after all. Don't worry any more than you can help, and keep on writing to me.

Devotedly and always,

YOUR STEPSON.

FRANCE, 26th August, 1916.

DEAREST STEPMOTHER,

Nothing to write—just a word to let you know I am well. My address here is: B—109 R. F. A.  
B. E. F.

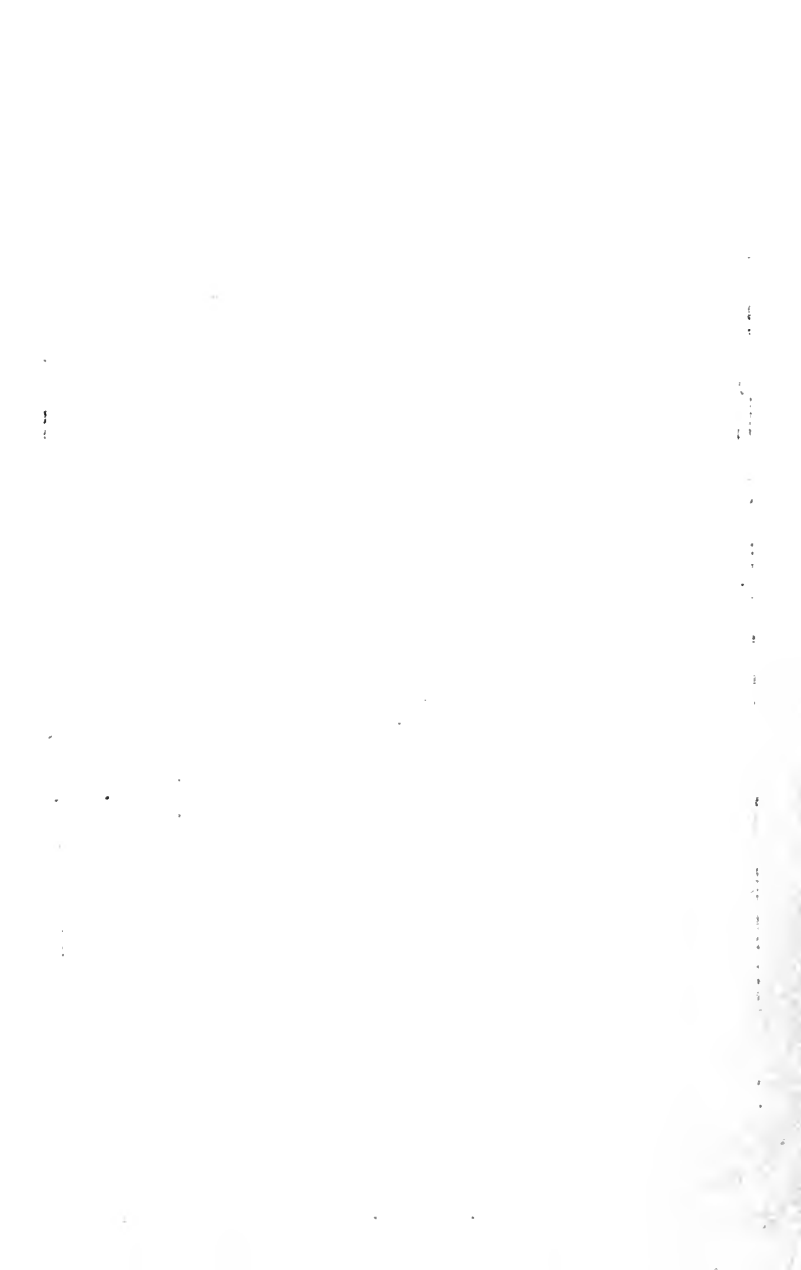
Mail has not been coming through well, so better be sure; address straight here.

Your devoted

STEPSON.

## **PART IV**

**FINIS**



*From Captain Nelson Zambra to E. C. O'S.*

1st Sept., 1916.

DEAR MRS. O'SULLIVAN,

A short time ago Harry Butters asked me to communicate with you should anything happen to him. Little did I think at the time that this sad duty would devolve on me so soon.

He was killed last night. He was with his guns, and no one could have died in a nobler way, or more in the execution of his duty.

I was his section commander in the D. A. C. and very glad I was when he returned to us. He was one of the brightest and cheeriest men I have ever known, and was always the life and soul of the mess. He was always willing for any duty, however unpleasant.

We all realised his nobility in coming to the help of another country, entirely of his own free will, and understood what a big heart he had.

Only last week the call came for him at the Battery to replace a casualty, and he responded at once, with never a complaint, and, to all appearances, in the best of spirits.

I grieve for you most deeply, though nothing I can say can adequately express my sorrow to you. For me, I have lost a friend.

I will not trouble you further now, but a little later I will write you more particulars, and tell you the location of his last resting place, where we lay him to rest to-morrow.

He was loved by all. I can say no more than that.

Believe me,

Very truly yours,

NELSON ZAMBRA, Capt.

No. 2. Sec. 24. D. A. C.

B. E. F.

*From a letter of Chaplain Milner, C Battery,  
107th Brigade to Lucile.*

September 2, 1916.

“ . . . As you know, Harry left our Battery a short time ago, and went to the Division Ammunition Column for a rest. He was sent up to B/109 a few days before his death. That was the battery he was first with.

I must tell you how much he was respected by all his officers and men, not only for his cheery spirit—for he never seemed down-hearted—but also for his bravery and courage which he constantly showed that he possessed. His heart was absolutely in this great and terrible fight for freedom. To quote his own words in the last note he sent me, ‘You know,’ he says, ‘how much my heart is in this great cause, and how more than willing I am to give my life for it.’ I think he had a presentiment of what was to happen from



the way in which he wrote, but he went readily and cheerily to meet whatever might befall.

We appreciated to the highest his sacrifice and nobleness in coming over to England to fight for us, knowing all the time that it might mean the Great Sacrifice. For those of us who may be spared, the example he has shown us will remain in our minds a lasting memory of what in this world is noble and generous. He has given us an example of what America at her *best and purest* can show us of a *true, straight, clean-living gentleman*.

He was buried this afternoon by a Roman Catholic Padre in the little English cemetery in the village some little way behind the firing line, where so many of our best and noblest now lie."

*From Captain Zambra's second letter, September 15th to E. C. O'S.*

("Harry and another officer were in the dugout at the gun position. The Germans were putting over a heavy barrage of gas shells and the air became very poisonous and oppressive. Harry said, 'It's time we moved out of this,' and went out. Immediately he was outside, a gas shell hit him direct. Death must have been instantaneous, and the officer with him removed his gas helmet to make sure. So some little consolation remains to us that he was spared all pain.)

A Roman Catholic Chaplain buried him beneath the Union Jack (we tried to get an American

flag, but one was not procurable or he should have been honored by both countries) in a military cemetery about 500 yards south of Meaulte, a little village a mile south of Albert. The graveyard is under the care of the Graves Registration Commission, and his grave will be well tended. His body was in a coffin.

There were many officers at the funeral, as many as could be spared from duty, including the Staff Captain, representing the General, and Colonel Talbot, a detachment from his battery and my section. A trumpeter sounded the *Last Post*."

*Letter from E. C. O'S. to San Francisco friends.*

KERRY VOR, BRITWELL,  
OXFORDSHIRE,  
September 10, 1917.

"Do you remember in poor Synge's 'Riders to the Sea'—the old mother says that now her last son is drowned, she will be able to sleep o' nights?

The harrowing anxiety of every day in this time of war is over for me, too. On July 22, as you know, Gerard, my first stepson, was killed. And on August 31, at night, too, my last—Harry Butters. They were both as dear to me as my own—but Gerard had his own people here—he was not dependent on me, while in a way, Harry had only me—his sister was six thousand miles away. I haven't been able to say much of him these last months as he had been getting the carbon copies of my letters to you. Yet it was so often on the

tip of my fingers to enlarge upon the boy—his charm, his capabilities.

More still upon the drama of his last experiences—from the moment when he burst into Aldwych his first day in uniform, so big, so startlingly handsome—above all, so gay—a shout of 'Stepmother!' that raised the dust in that crowded, smoky refuge where the hundreds of tired Belgians looked around in astonishment that any one left in the world could be so fresh, so dazzling—through those months of his watch beside his guns of directing fire from his exposed shell-swept hillside—that awful moment the last day of May when the enemy found the range and poured death down upon the shelter that was no shelter—when the other officers within call took refuge there, fourteen in all; Harry, the youngest, but the one who dashed out under fire to carry what was left of one of his telephonists to the first-aid station—a poor mangled mass of humanity, still breathing and crying out,—a deed that in a smaller war would have meant the Victoria Cross, but in this, only one of a thousand such daily—After it his sudden collapse from the shock—('No one knew it, Stepmother! I managed to bluff it through!') But his colonel had been through the same experience and backed the doctor up in sending him to the base for a few days.

Then his June leave, luckily due anyway, brought him over to Number 7 where he could be ~~petted and~~ taken care of—but it was a quiet Harry—no less clear-eyed and vigorous, but so, so tired.

Then Winston Churchill <sup>was</sup> and ~~Garvin~~ trying to make him take three weeks' extra leave, the boy's refusal, his return to France, some weeks in the ammunition column, where, knowing him to be comparatively safe, I could carry an easier heart; then a hasty line: 'Just going up to one of the batteries to replace a casualty. It's too bad it comes while I'm in bad shape, but it can't be helped, and it surely is what I'm here for, after all. Don't worry any more than you can help.'

That was August 22; only short notes after that, tho' he could find time to write, "I'm going to try to get over to Gerard's grave. If I can find some flowers I'll decorate it for you."

His friend, Captain Zambra, to whom he'd given my address, could not have been with him at the last, for he also had had shell-shock and was with the ammunition column; but he wrote on the 1st of September that Harry had been with his guns the night before, when the call came, had gone in apparently the best of spirits—and at 11 that Thursday night was killed.

I was in town—went up Monday and, on Tuesday, the 5th, came this letter, sent to Number 7. I cabled Harry's sister, through Oscar Sutro, that he died splendidly—the boy himself had written when Gerard was killed, 'What a magnificent end it is for his life; the greatest luck that can come to any man.'

It has been so beautiful this week. I've never seen a harvest-moon more wonderful. One can only think . . . what a world it is—and Harry and Gerard both out of it."

## AFTERWORD

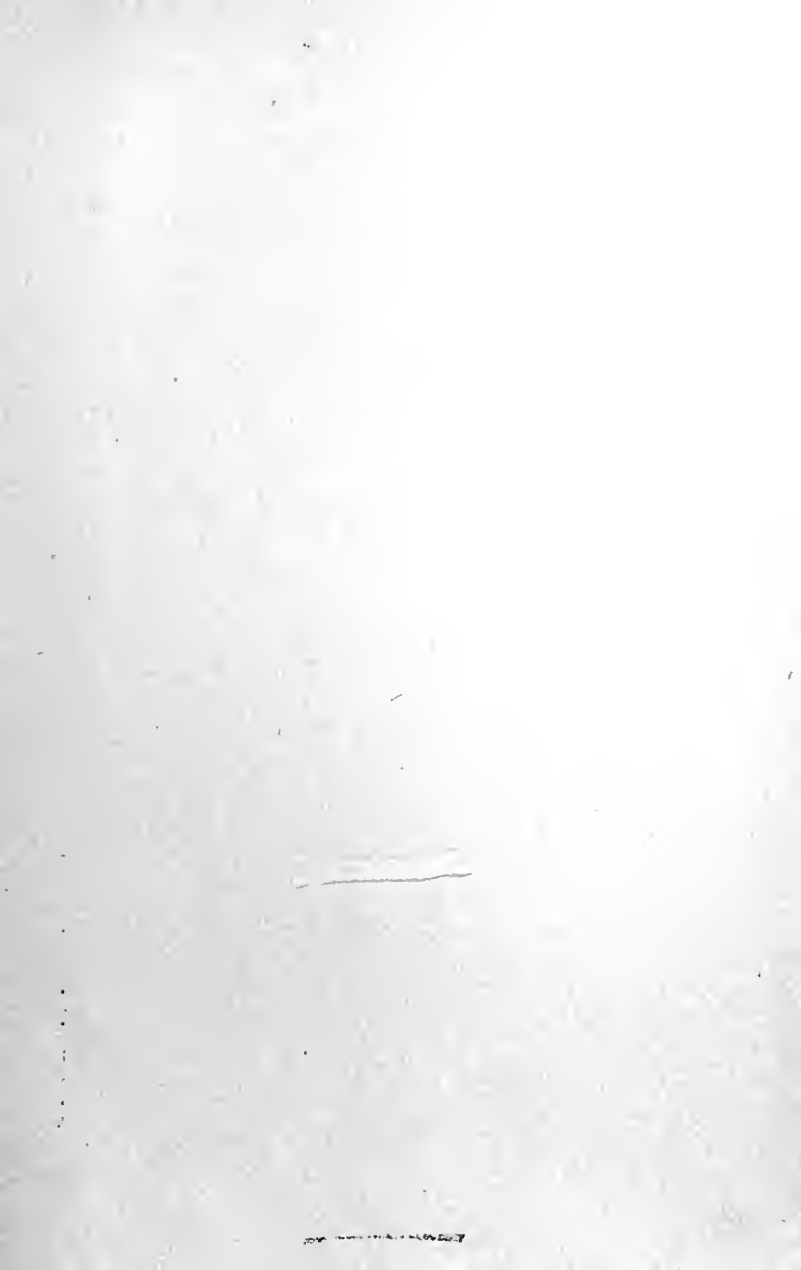
*It is six months since this little book was begun, and Harry's "own dear country" has, as he so hoped and prayed, "come in."*

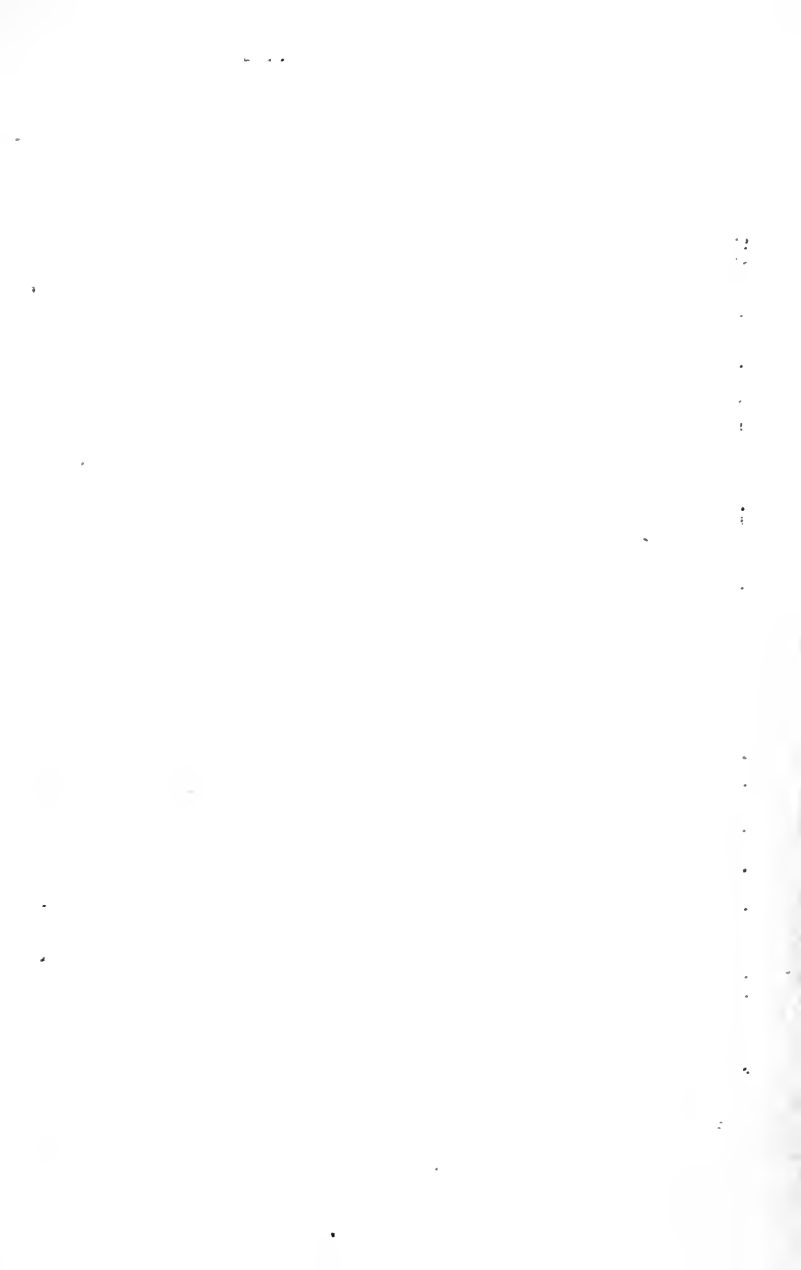
*It is three years since England declared war, and the boy stopped suddenly in his happy progress under these serene Californian skies to realise what it meant. It is two years to-day since, trained and ready, he left conqueringly for the Front. One year ago to-day he fell.*

*There was no time to call, like Gerard, "Carry on!" . . . that phrase still unfamiliar to American ears. But had he known, had there been time, would he not have called to the Ten Million, to those other American boys from the Atlantic to the Pacific, who have at last turned clear eyes toward that monstrous struggle between right and wrong . . . would he not have called to his own, "Come on"?*

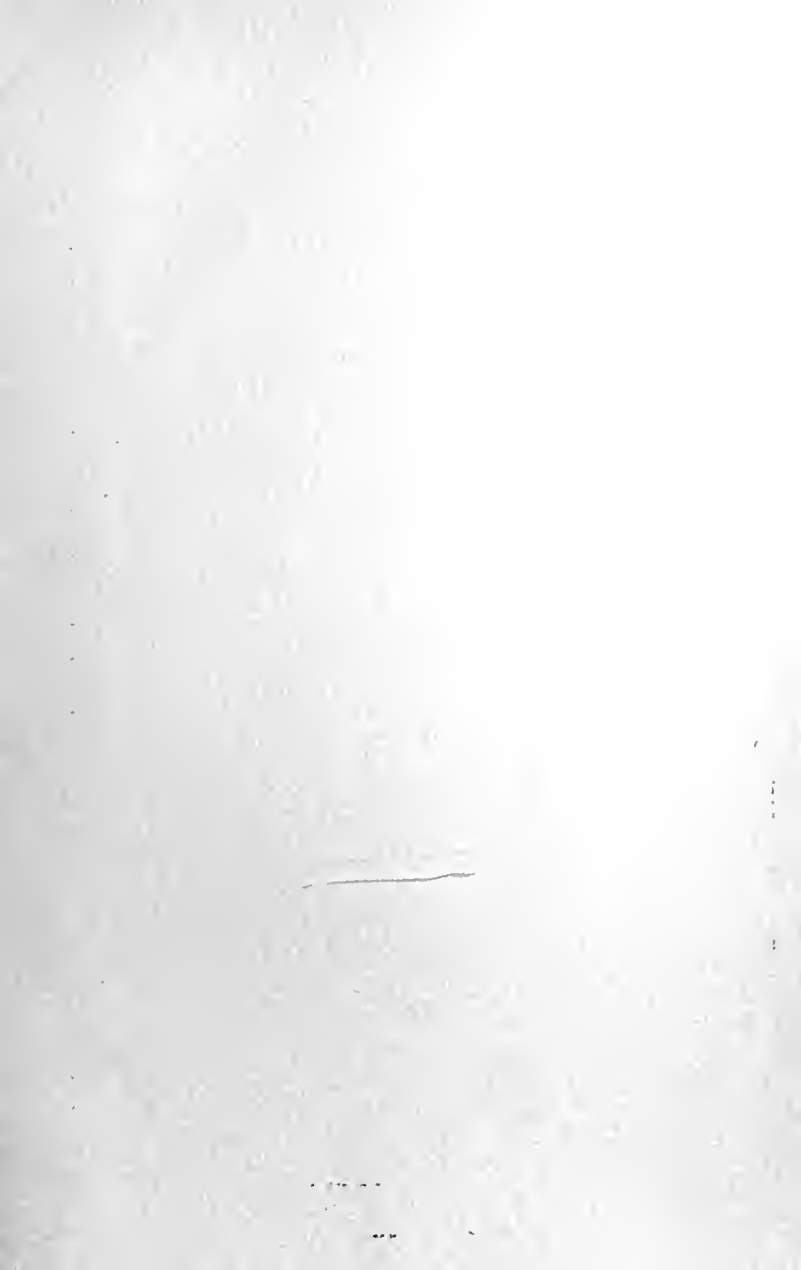
*San Francisco,  
August 31, 1917.*



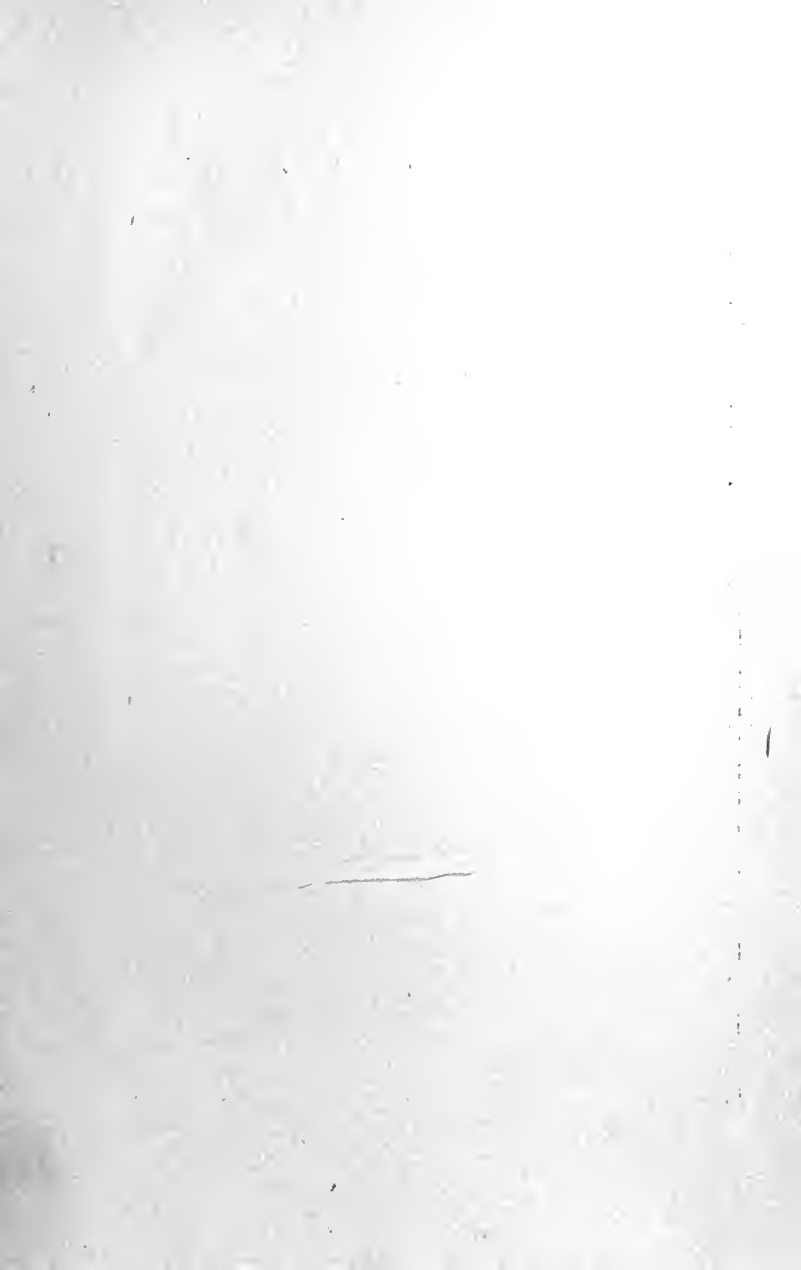




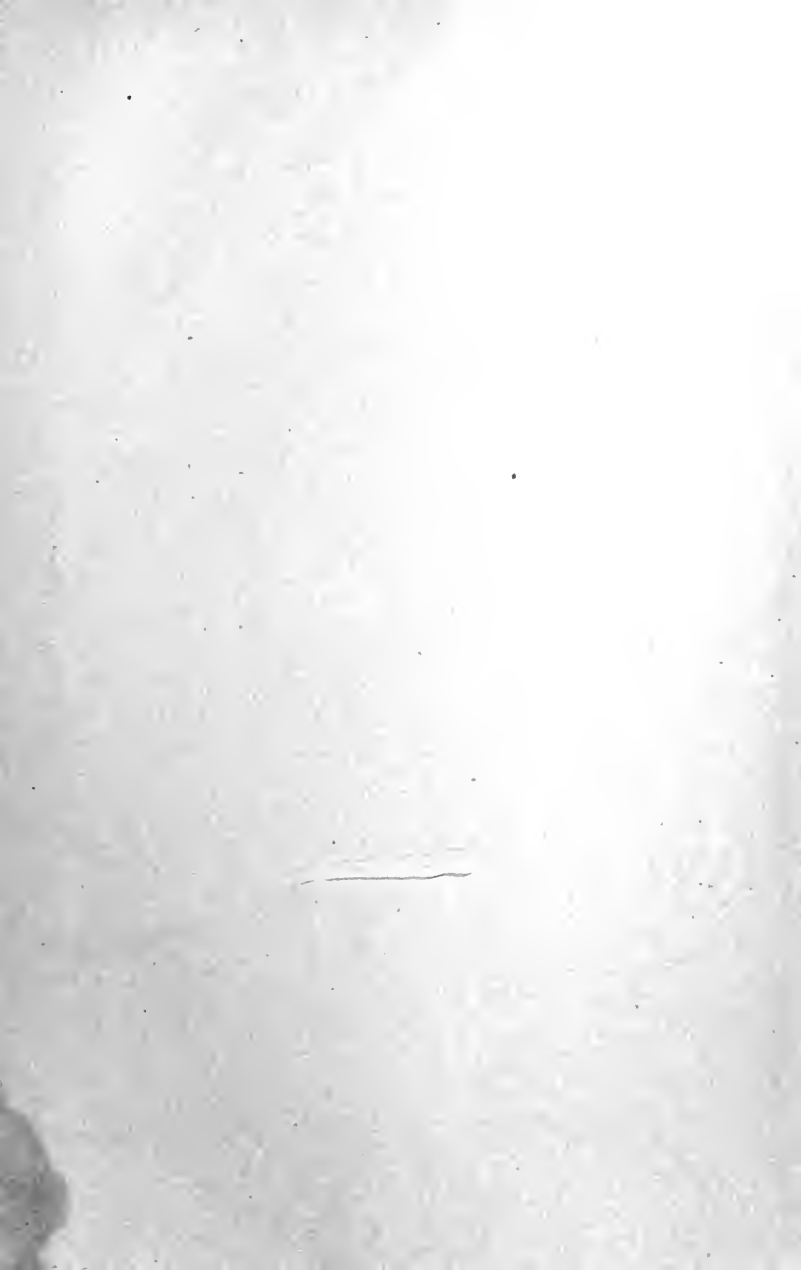












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